A POWERFUL NEW SERIAL HAS JUST COMMENCED.


# SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 388. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 6TH, 1896. [ONE PENNY.



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## WONDERFUL BARGAINS!

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| | ft. | in. | ft. | in. | Sale Price. s. | d. | Former Price. s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. 1 | 3 | 0 | by 6 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 0 |
| „ 2 | 3 | 0 | „ 7 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 11 | 6 |
| „ 3 | 3 | 0 | „ 9 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 13 | 6 |
| „ 4 | 3 | 6 | „ 7 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 9 |
| „ 5 | 3 | 6 | „ 9 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 6 |
| „ 6 | 3 | 6 | „ 9 | 0 | 11 | 6 | 18 | 0 |
| „ 7 | 3 | 6 | „ 10 | 6 | 12 | 0 | 18 | 6 |
| „ 8 | 3 | 6 | „ 10 | 6 | 13 | 6 | 20 | 6 |
| No. 9 | 3 | 6 | by 9 | 0 | 14 | 3 | 22 | 6 |
| „ 10 | 3 | 6 | „ 10 | 6 | 15 | 3 | 24 | 0 |
| „ 11 | 3 | 6 | „ 12 | 0 | 16 | 3 | 24 | 0 |
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| „ 13 | 3 | 6 | „ 12 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 32 | 0 |
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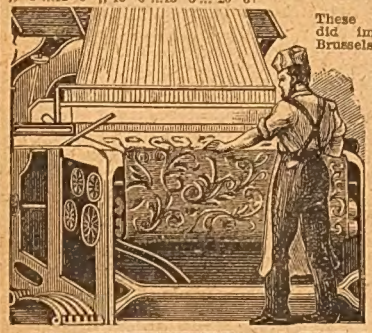

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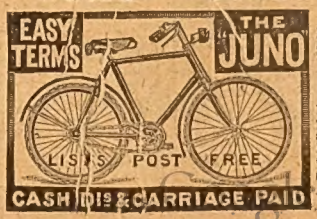


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| Lengths | 35 | 38 | 42 | 46 | 50 inches. |
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**No. 23**

June 6, 1896.

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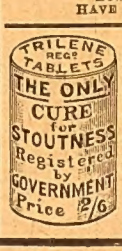
will produce the most lovely complexion that the imagination could desire; clear, fresh, free from blotch, blemish, coarseness, redness, freckles, or pimples. Post free for 4/6.—**S. HARVEY,** 5, Denman St., London Bridge, S.E. Half-boxes 2/9. Use **Dr. MACKENZIE'S ARSENICAL TOILET SOAP.** 1s. per Tablet; No. 2, unscented, 6d. per Tablet. **Made from Purest Ingredients and Absolutely Harmless.**

Beware of the many imitations.

HAVE DR. MACKENZIE'S OR NONE.

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# SHORT STORIES.

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 388.] For the Week ending June 6th, 1896. [ONE PENNY.

# GRASPED by Death.

I DOUBT if a more terrible thing ever happened to any man than that which happened to me in the autumn of 1889. The memory of it all is with me now as though it were but yesterday; and sometimes I wake shrieking in my dreams, and lie awake all night, oppressed with a great agony of fear.

I was a clerk in Burton's bank at Exeter. For some days I had been queer and out of sorts. More than once I had been conscious of what seemed to me to be a sudden numbness of the limbs. For instance, on two separate occasions I had been incapable of rising from my office stool.

My wife and fellow clerks noticed that I did not seem to be in my usual health, and my wife in particular had been urgent in intreating me to take my annual holiday without delay. But I had some complicated accounts to balance, which I was unable to leave undone; and that more especially since they had given me an infinitude of trouble, the sought-for balance being exactly the thing I could not get.

It was the evening of September 14th. It was a Friday. I had decided at the last moment to remain at the bank after the rest had gone, for I had arranged that if only I could get the accounts all right, I would start for Penzance the following morning with my wife.

It had been a hot day, that Friday—a terrible day—and all day long I had been conscious not only of a curious unwillingness, but of an absolute incapacity, to move. In some extraordinary way my limbs seemed, in a measure, to have passed from my control.

I suppose it was past six o'clock. I was all alone in the bank; the rest of the establishment had left a good hour ago. I was leaning forward on my desk, racking my brains to think where the error could be, when—shall I ever forget it?—in an instant—a flash of lightning—I became conscious of a singular sensation which was stealing over me. It was just as though some malevolent spirit had woven a spell, and deprived me of the power of motion. I was spell-bound, rooted to my seat, as helpless as though I had been struck by the hand of death.

The strangest part of it was, that while in that sudden awful visitation I had lost the use of my limbs, I had preserved my faculties intact. I could see—straight in front, that is—for not only could I not even close my eyes, but I could not even change the direction of my glance. I could only look straight in front of me with what I felt instinctively must be a fixed, horrible, glassy stare. But what there was in front of me, that I could plainly see. And I could hear; indeed my hearing seemed to be unnaturally keen. For instance, Burton's Bank is in the Cathedral Yard. Not only could I hear every footstep which passed even on the other side of the Cathedral—no slight distance for the sound of a foot to travel—but I could hear the traffic that went up and down Fore Street Hill and over the bridge, right away to St. Thomas's on the other side. And worse, for in the horror of all that followed it was of a surety the worst of all—I could think. My brain, like my hearing, seemed to become phenomenally clear. Instantaneously I knew what had come upon me. It was catalepsy. I was in a cataleptic fit.

I felt no pain—physical pain, at least. In that sense

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I was like a man whose physical side is dead, but whose mind still lives.

And as I sat there hour after hour, dead, my agony of mind rose to such a climax that I cannot but think that it transcended whatever agony of body the most morbid imagination has at any time described.

It grew dark—so dark that my eyes became useless for any purpose of sight, and yet they would not shut. It became silent, too, the intense silence of the night.

But all at once, when the night was stillest, a sound struck on my ears—a peculiar sound, as of someone who walked with muffled steps. And then—could it be? Yes! A window was being opened.

I cannot doubt that the only thing which had kept me from promptly falling on to the floor when the fit had first taken me, was the fact that I was leaning so forward that the greater part of my weight was on the desk. So, leaning forward on the desk, I stayed.

Just in front of me was a glass partition, on the other side of which was the inner office, in which the safe was kept. It was the window of the inner office which was being opened now. By what I cannot but suppose was a providential accident, since I could not alter the direction of my glance, the safe was right in my line of sight. And so, although I could not immediately see who it was that entered, directly the intruder came between myself and the safe I could see him plainly.

*It was Philip Morris, our head cashier.*

At first all was dark. Then a light was struck, and someone, bearing a shaded lantern in his hand, appeared in my line of sight.

It was Philip Morris, our head cashier, and practically the manager of the bank!

I shall never forget my unutterable amazement when I perceived that it was he. What could bring him there at such an hour, in such a way? He wore a light dust-coat, which was unbuttoned down the front, so that I could see his dress-clothes beneath, and the diamonds gleaming in his shirt. He carried a small leather bag in his hand.

He took a bunch of keys from his pocket; with these he unlocked the safe. From it he took a quantity of notes—I could hear them rustle—and several bags of gold, which jingled as he dropped them in his bag. Then he turned right round, so that I saw him full in the face.

"If Wheeler could only see me now"—I should mention that my name is Wheeler. The allusion was to me—"I think he would soon unriddle the mystery of his accounts. Well, the game is up, I suppose. I had my fling, even if the result is penal servitude for life. I flatter myself that few men would have had the dexterity to carry it on for so long a time."

He came a few steps forward, the lantern in his hand, and suddenly stopped short.

His eyes were fixed on the glass partition. On his face there was an expression of the most awful, ghastly fear. His lips seemed parched. He gasped for breath.

For a moment I thought he would be seized with a convulsion; but he had sufficient control over himself to ward off that.

He spoke at last, and his voice was like the unearthly utterance of a strangled man.

"Wheeler! Wheeler! Is it you? For God's sake don't look like that! Your eyes are horrible!"

He covered his own eyes with his hand; I could see him shudder. Then he looked again; his mood was changed. With quick, firm steps, he advanced to the partition door, and entered the office in which I was.

"I suppose you think you have caught me?" he cried. "I congratulate you on your cleverness. But perhaps you have caught more than you think."

Suddenly he seemed struck by my immobility. He came a step nearer.

"Why do you sit there like a wooden block, you hypocritical old fool? Do you hear? Can't you speak? You think you have trapped me very neatly, eh?"

He paused. He came a step nearer.

"Can't you speak, you fool? Wheeler! Wheeler!"

He laid his hand upon my shoulder. He shone the lantern in my face.

Suddenly he gave the most dreadful shriek that ever I had heard.

"My God!" he cried. "He's dead!"

In his sudden fear the lantern fell from his hand with a crash. He gave me a push which sent me flying head foremost to the floor. And where I fell, like a dead man I lay.

* * * * *

I lay on my own bed in my own bedroom. Oh, what had I done to deserve the agony which I endured then?

There was my wife on her knees beside the bed, there was a candle which flickered on the chest of drawers, although daylight had already streamed into the room, and there was I, wrapped in the garments which enfold the dead.

How my wife wept! How she mourned in the sudden anguish of her woe! Now she called upon God for mercy and for strength, and now she got upon the bed

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and pillowed her head upon my breast, or bedewed my face with her kisses and tears.

"Richard!" she cried, "Richard! After all these years! My own! My dear!"

And then she wept as though her heart would break. Who shall conceive my agony as I lay there?

A little later there was this scene.

Five men came into the room. There was Dr. Leverson, my own medical attendant; Wilfrid Burton, the banker, whom, man and boy, I had served for thirty years; Mr. Fellows, the lawyer to the bank; Philip Morris, that accursed thief; and Philipson, the chief of police.

It was Mr. Burton who spoke first. His voice was dry and cold—very different from the kindly, pleasant voice I knew so well.

"Before we go any further, I suppose, Dr. Leverson, there is no doubt that this wretched man is dead?"

Dr. Leverson smiled a superior smile.

"Richard Wheeler is certainly dead. I have the certificate of death in my pocket. The funeral is already arranged. He died from valvular disease of the heart, a disease of whose presence I had long been aware." My brain reeled as I listened to the glib announcement. "Doubtless his death was accelerated at the last by a sudden shock."

"God," said Mr. Burton, with a solemnity, the unconscious irony of which was hideous, "saw fit to strike down the criminal at the moment of his crime."

I wondered what Philip Morris looked like as he heard the words. He was out of my line of sight.

"And now," continued Mr. Burton, "proceed to the business which has brought us here. I need not point out to you, Doctor Leverson, that all that passes here is in the strictest confidence." I presume that the Doctor bowed his head. "The bank has been the victim of"—the speaker's voice trembled, and I felt that my wife covered her face with her hands—"of the most terrible dishonesty. To what extent the affair has gone I have not yet been able to ascertain, but I fear we have been robbed to the extent of at least a hundred thousand pounds."

A hundred thousand pounds! No wonder I could not get the accounts to balance! That villain had robbed us of one hundred thousand pounds at least, and I lay speechless there.

"Mr. Morris will already made to me. it down, and we will Captain Philipson. repeat the statement which he has You, Mr. Fellows, will kindly take have it attested in the presence of Mrs. Wheeler you need not stop; it will only be painful for your feelings. Indeed, I think you had better go away."

"Sir," said my dear wife—oh, how her dear voice rang through my brain—"whatever Mr. Morris may have to say, I never shall believe that of my dear husband, who was a God-fearing man for nearly thirty years."

"Ah, Mrs. Wheeler, how appearances may deceive. I had to the full as much confidence in him as you. Before you think that I misjudge him, hear what Mr. Morris has to say."

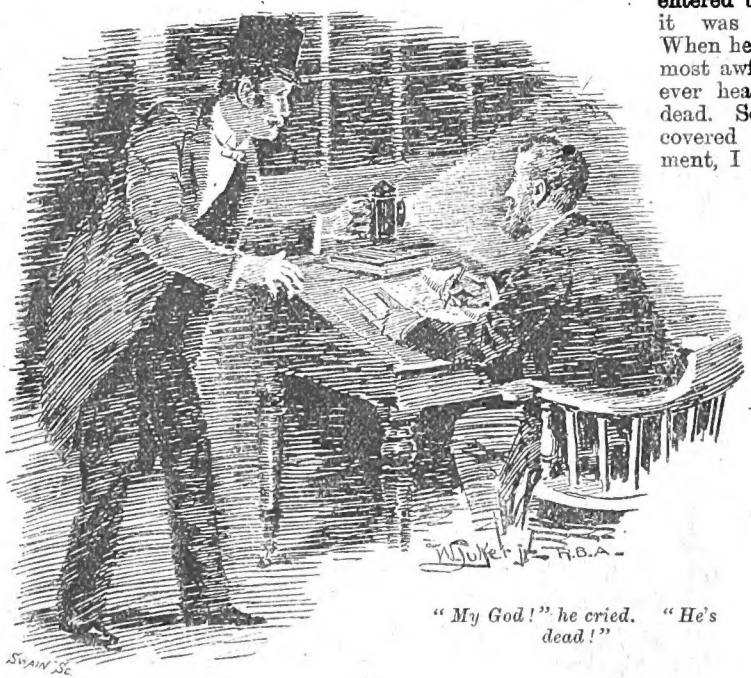
Philip Morris began his tale. It flashed upon me in an instant that he had availed himself of my supposed decease to fasten his guilt upon my head. But I had never imagined that anyone, in his circumstances, could have carried the matter through with so easy an air. There was even an affectation of pathos in his tone as he filled in the details of his horrid lie.

"I had been spending the evening at Mr. Fisher's"—Mr. Fisher was one of the minor canons, a bachelor, who was reputed to have a taste for whist, and for hours which were perhaps a little uncanonical—"I was returning home, when, on passing the bank, I noticed that there seemed to be a light in the office in which the safe is kept. The window, as you know, is but a few feet from the ground; I have often pointed out how easy it would be for a thief to get in that way."

"I know you have!" said Mr. Burton.

The hypocrite went on:

"To my surprise, I found it was unlatched. I opened it. Whoever was within was too much absorbed in his occupation to notice what I did. I looked through the open window, and saw that someone was in the inner office, but who it was I could not at first perceive. I climbed through the window, and went in. Directly I entered the man looked up; it was Richard Wheeler. When he saw me he gave the most awful scream I think I ever heard, and fell down—dead. So soon as I had recovered from my bewilderment, I went to the window and called for help. A constable, who heard me, came to my assistance. Together we examined the room. That is all I have to say. I only wish that I had not to say so much."



*"My God!" he cried. "He's dead!"*

"But there is more that must be said," Mr. Burton took up the strain. "In the grate were found the half-consumed fragments of the accounts, which if they had been suffered to continue in existence would inevitably have betrayed the dead man's crime. The safe was found open—it is still a mystery how he contrived to open it—ransacked of all the chief valuables it contained. On his desk was found a bag containing five hundred pounds in gold, and in his pockets notes for a

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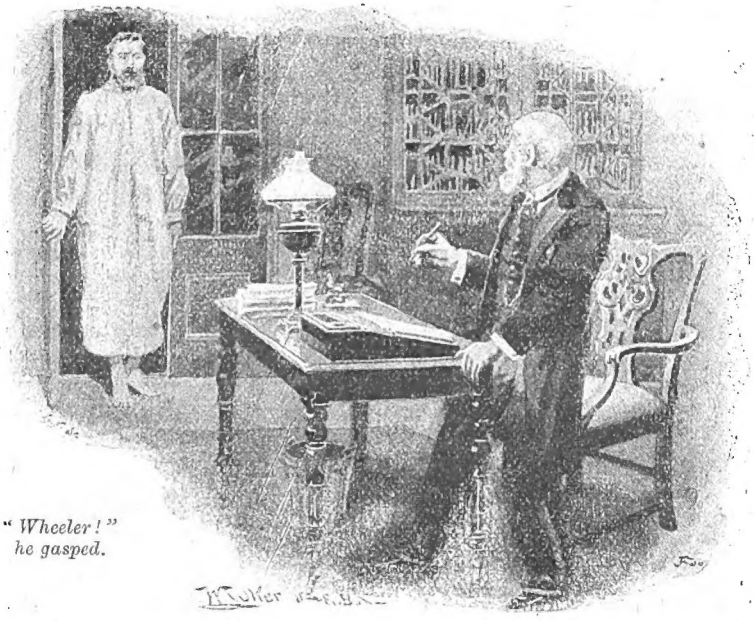
thousand pounds. But notes and gold to the value of ten thousand pounds, and securities to a very large amount are gone. We have still to find out where. I am sorry to tell you, Mrs. Wheeler, that to search this house is one of the purposes which have brought us here."



*"Wheeler!" he gasped.*

"Sir," said my wife, "you need make no apology. You are welcome to search the house from basement to attic. You will find nothing that was not righteously my dear husband's own."

* * * * *

For five days I lay there—dead. Words cannot describe the agony I endured. Conceive it, if you can. Picture yourself in my position; conceive what you would suffer then. Far better had I indeed been dead.

On the second day they came and measured me for my coffin. Think of it—a living man! On the fourth day they brought it home, and I was placed within. There were two of them that brought it, and as they placed me in that narrow box they cracked their little jest.

"A tight fit, isn't he?" said one.

"Ah," replied his fellow, "they'd have given him as tight a fit if he had lived; four strong walls for life."

"Who'd ever have thought that old Dick Wheeler would have come to the gallows?"

"Well," again replied his fellow—how I loathed that man!—"I would for one. I never knew a psalm-singer yet that wasn't a robber and a thief."

When that choice pair had gone, my wife came in and looked at me as I lay in my last bed. She had a wreath in her hand, which she placed upon my breast, and a white rose, which betokened innocence, which she placed within the wreath. She stooped and kissed me on the brow; and, as she did so, she burst into a flood of tears.

"Oh, God!" she cried; "show that my dear husband was not a thief!"

The next day, the fifth, they came and screwed me down. Imagine that! I learned from what they said that they feared that if in that hot weather I was left for a longer time exposed, decomposition would set in. When they had already placed the lid upon my coffin, my wife came running in. I learned that they had come in her absence to shut me for ever from her sight. They imagined that if she were there she might object to what they did. Her appearance disconcerted them. She made them immediately remove the lid, and bade them withdraw from the room, so that she might have final solitary communion with her dead.

She knelt down by the side of my coffin and prayed. She expressed the most profound belief in the innocence of the man who had been her husband for nearly thirty years; and she besought the Most High that He would expound that innocence and make it clear to man. Then she stood up and kissed me on the lips—kissed me a last good-bye!

Then she left me, to the full as broken-hearted as she herself, and the undertaker's men returned and screwed me down.

How long I remained in that box, screwed down, I never knew. It seemed to me a hundred years. A dreadful thought came to me, not once, but again and again, with recurring force.

Suppose that I, indeed, was dead? Who knows the mysteries of death? Is it not conceivable that when the body dies, the mind, which has such a mysterious affinity with the soul, may live? If I were dead, and the shame should live! Was it possible that through the long cycle of the years, the æons which were still to come, my mind should live, and I be dead?

It is not strange that my pen should tremble as I recall the thoughts which racked then—racked me with such intensity that, even in my state of death, I feared I should go mad. And then? What then? Mad through the æons in the womb of time! Even dead, I thought my brain would burst.

I tried to scream. I struggled as with the issues of life and death for the power to give expression to the great agony of my fear and pain.

And then? What happened then? To this hour I cannot precisely say. I know that while, mentally, I struggled with inconceivable eagerness to cry out, I suddenly awoke. I know no other words to use. I knew I was alive—alive, and imprisoned in that box! And I do believe that for the first few moments of my resurrection—what was it else?—I actually was mad. I had a madman's strength, at any rate. I struggled like a madman, too—struggled to be free—and with such strength that I burst the box, forced the coffin's sides, and was a prisoner no more.

I stood upon my feet.

As I did so I discovered that my display of strength must have been a sort of frenzy, for, indeed, I was so weak that at first I could not stand. I sank back upon my bed. But only for a moment. There was that within me which gave me strength. I was filled with an overmastering desire to proclaim my innocence, and bring home to the criminal his crime. Wholly regardless of the clothes I wore, forgetful of them even, I went downstairs into the street, and ran to Mr. Burton's as certainly I never ran before.

I must have cut a pretty figure as I ran, but Mr.

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Burton's great house was within a couple of hundred yards of my more modest residence; the hour was late, and I never met a creature on the way.

I was well acquainted both with the banker's habits and his house. I knew that often, when the rest of the household was fast asleep, Mr. Burton would sit for hours writing in the study which opened on to the lawn at the back. To this room I hastened.

It was as I supposed. There was a bright light within. I turned the handle of the French window; it yielded to my touch. Without pausing for an instant to reflect on what the consequence of my act might be, I burst into the room.

As I entered, Mr. Burton was sitting writing at a table. When he saw me he rose from his seat. He clutched the edge of the table. He gazed at me, speechless, unable to believe that what he saw was real.

"Wheeler!" he gasped at last; "Richard Wheeler!"

"Yes, sir, 'tis I! Not dead, but living. This is no ghost you gaze upon, but a creature of flesh and blood, to whom God has given strength to declare his innocence, and expose another's crime."

I poured out my tale. He was too bewildered at first to grasp the meaning of my words. It was all so unexpected and so strange, that he was unable to realise that he was not the victim of some dreadful dream. But it became plain to him at last.

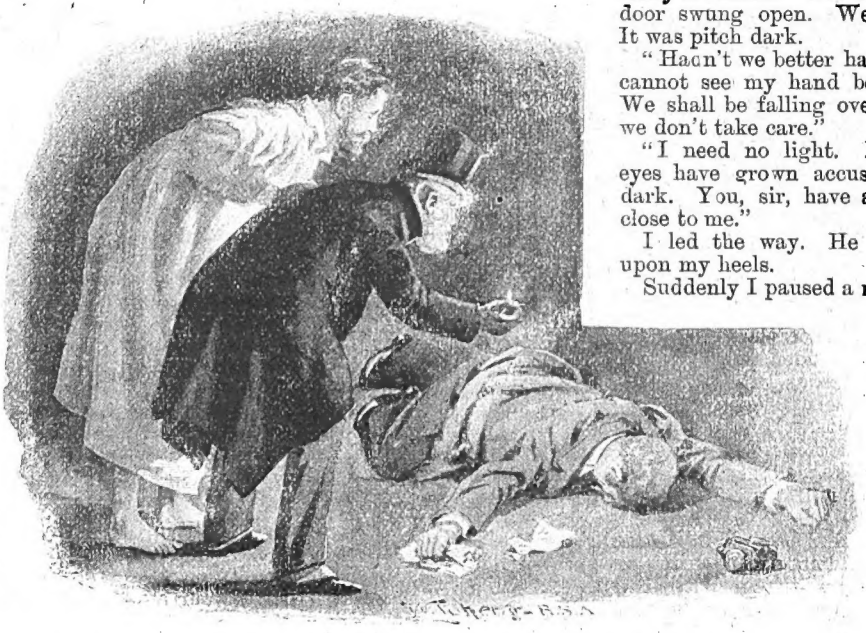
"How awful!" he exclaimed. "You make my blood run cold."

"But it is the truth; and things are revealed to me which to you are hidden."

I rose up, still in my grave clothes, trembling like a leaf. "At this instant the thief is at his work again, and tampers with the safe. Mr. Burton, I intreat you to come with me to the bank; his villainy shall be proved to-night."

"Come with you—to the bank—at this hour?"

But I had my way. The banker lent me some of his own clothes, and a great coat was thrown over my shoulders. The coachman was roused; a carriage was ordered out. Within a few minutes we were seated in it, and were being driven swiftly towards the bank, through the silent streets, to catch the criminal in the very moment of his crime.



*We found him . . . lying in a fit upon the floor.*

The carriage was drawn up some little distance from the bank. We got out. Mr. Burton had the key of the private door. We approached swiftly yet silently as well. Our chief object was not to give the alarm.

On the very threshold Mr. Burton paused.

"I am afraid that this is a wild-goose chase that you have brought me on. Some folks would even call it by a stronger name."

"Can you not hear him? Hark? He rustles a bundle of notes! They are those notes which were missing, and which you searched my house to find."

"Hear him, Wheeler? Are you mad? When he is in the private office—if he is anywhere at all—we are out in the street."

"I can hear him, if you can't. Give me the key or open the door. Every moment which we waste increases his chance of escape."

Hesitatingly—I believe he doubted my sanity even then—Mr. Burton put the key into the lock. Noiselessly it turned. Without a sound, the door swung open. We stood inside. It was pitch dark.

"Hadn't we better have a light? I cannot see my hand before my face. We shall be falling over something if we don't take care."

"I need no light. Remember my eyes have grown accustomed to the dark. You, sir, have always to keep close to me."

I led the way. He followed close upon my heels.

Suddenly I paused a moment.

"See; there is a light!"

Sure enough there was, in the inner room—in that inner room in which the safe was kept.

I caught Mr. Burton by the arm.

"Sir, come a little further, You shall see the criminal in his crime."

Then I stole by the outer door into the office in which I had been overtaken by that strange mockery of death. Through the glass partition, sure enough, I saw at a glance that Philip Morris, lantern in hand, was at his old work, busied with the contents of the safe. I leaned right forward on the desk, and tapped with my finger against the glass. He approached the partition; I saw him trembling as he came.

When he was quite close, in my grave clothes I rose straight up, and looking him straight in the face—his pallid, panic-stricken face—I raised my arm above my head, and in a loud voice, cried out:

"Thou thief!"

A wild shriek rang through the night; and sometimes in my ears I seem to hear it still.

When Mr. Burton and I ran in, we found him stricken by a sudden agony of conscience-stricken fear, a bundle of bank-notes in the frenzied grip of his right hand, lying in a fit upon the floor. M.

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# The Changing Butterfly

## A Fairy Tale

I.

A VERY charming young prince wished to marry. But to wish was not enough; it was necessary to take pains in order to find a suitable wife. It would never do to offer the half of his throne to a shrew under the mistaken impression that she was an angel!

For the prince's tutor, with many a sigh, had told him that a frequent effect of marriage was the transformation of angels into shrews. The poor man spoke feelingly, for he was himself tied to a shrew, whom in her first youth he had certainly thought angelic.

The tutor's warnings were not thrown away upon the prince, but he could not decide on any satisfactory course of action. He resolved to take a little holiday in Scotland. Possibly the change of air might clear his brain and fortify his nerves for his onerous task.

To Scotland, accordingly, he went. There, one day, as he wandered pensively along the banks of a blue lake, he heard a scream and a splash, and saw something struggling in the water. It was a little old woman, who, while washing her linen in the lake, had leaned over too far and tumbled in head foremost.

The prince unhesitatingly plunged in after her, got her safely out, and placed her upon the bank, not, however, without having a sharp tussle with an enormous fish, which seemed desirous of devouring him and his burden.

II.

Now, the little old woman was a fairy. She was, of course, much obliged to the good prince, and said to him:

"If you had not been here I should inevitably have been devoured by that wicked fish. He is an enchanter, my mortal enemy, who has been lying in wait for me for the last nine hundred and ninety-nine years. I should like to reward you for your great kindness. Tell me what you wish for, and I will help you to obtain it."

"I wish, madam, to marry," replied the prince.

"Ha! ha!" tittered the fairy.

"But I would like to have some means of finding out the true character of my future wife—whether she be an angel or a shrew."

"That, my good friend, is a thing which none can be sure of beforehand. It depends a little upon the woman, and a great deal upon the man. However, I will keep my word to you so far as it is possible."

Then the fairy put a silver whistle to her lips.

Her call was answered instantly by a little, grey, yet exquisitely beautiful butterfly, which alighted upon her finger.

"You see this butterfly?" said the fairy to the prince. "When you have made your choice you have only to say to him: 'Come, fluttering butterfly, and flutter upon the forehead of my beloved!' and he will hasten to do your bidding. Mark well the result. If he become red, that is a sign that your sweetheart has a temper; if he turn green she is a coquette; if rose colour, she is greedy; if blue, she is a gossip. But if the butterfly become *white*, then she is a veritable pearl!"

With these words the fairy and the butterfly disappeared.

III.

For a long time the prince travelled about searching for a wife. He visited China, France, Germany, England, and America.

In all these countries he found hosts of charming girls who would have been proud to marry a prince, and who—every one of them—with their downcast eyes and ingenuous smiles, resembled so many little angels.

But invariably when, in obedience to the prince's summons, the fairy's butterfly fluttered upon the fair one's brow, it took sometimes one colour, sometimes another, but it never, never became white.

Upon more than one occasion it displayed all the colours at the same time. Whenever this happened the prince fled immediately to another country, there to renew his vain quest.

It proved, indeed, a most difficult task to find a

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woman who was neither greedy, nor coquettish, nor idle, nor talkative, nor passionate.

At length, however, the prince met a very beautiful maiden, the daughter of a rich lord. He felt that even if he failed to win her, he could never wed another. By which it may be perceived that he was very deeply in love indeed.

It was a delicious time for our young prince! The lady was not only beautiful but highly accomplished. She embroidered like a fairy, sang like a seraph, and was full of wit, grace, and good sense.

"I have a good mind to marry her without consulting the butterfly," though the enamoured prince.

Prudence prevailed, however, and the lover whispered very softly—half-hoping that the butterfly would not hear him—the usual formula:

"Come, fluttering butterfly, flutter upon the forehead of my beloved."

But the little grey butterfly, who was for the time the prince's slave, heard and obeyed.

IV.

AT the critical moment, the prince and the maiden were walking together in a lovely garden. Just at the instant when the butterfly made his appearance, and was about to alight upon the fair forehead, the girl cried out suddenly:

"Oh, I am so frightened! Is not that a serpent down there in the grass? Run, my friend, oh! run and see! and kill the horrible thing!"

Naturally, the prince, forgetting the butterfly, ran to the spot indicated. He found no serpent there, and returned to his sweetheart's side with the assurance that she had been mistaken, and that there was nothing to fear.

*"Oh, I am so frightened!"*

As he was speaking he raised his eyes, and could not repress a joyous exclamation.

For the butterfly was white as the wing of the whitest swan, white as the purest snow of the North Pole.

The same evening he proposed for the lady's hand, and eight days later the wedding took place.

And in fifteen days' time, the prince had made the disconcerting discovery that his wife possessed every possible fault, and that, therefore, he should not be anything like so happy as he had expected to be.

V.

MAD with disappointment, he returned to Scotland in order to find the old fairy, and acquaint her with his ill-luck.

After hearing his tale, the fairy conferred with her butterfly, and then remarked:

"Well, I don't know what to think! The butterfly assures me that as soon as he touched the princess's forehead, he turned all colours, and that they were very pronounced! I must believe what he says, for he always speaks the truth, and his judgment is infallible!"

"My sight must have been in fault," replied the poor prince. And there was nothing for it but to return to his fallen angel.

VI.

ONE day, when she was in a more amiable mood than usual, she and her husband were talking over old times. The prince took the opportunity of inquiring whether his wife remembered their stroll in the magnificent garden, and the strange terror that had seized her there.

"Oh, yes! I remember it well!" replied the princess. "as well as if it happened yesterday! How simple you were in those days! I was perfectly well aware that there was no serpent about; but having a moment before stolen a glance at my pocket-mirror, I had observed that my face was slightly red. Fearing lest this should displease you, I wished to put a little powder on it, if I could do so without being seen. And so—" She paused.

"And so?" prompted the now much interested prince.

"And so I invented for you that small commission. See how retentive my memory is! I remember how at that moment a tiresome grey butterfly came fluttering about my head. I shook my powder-puff over him, and was extremely amused to see him turn as white all over as a painted clown."

EDITH SUMMERS.

There are Many - - - - -

Less beautiful covers than that of "PEARSON'S MAGAZINE" for June. And the contents are consistent with the design on the cover—Refined and Good.

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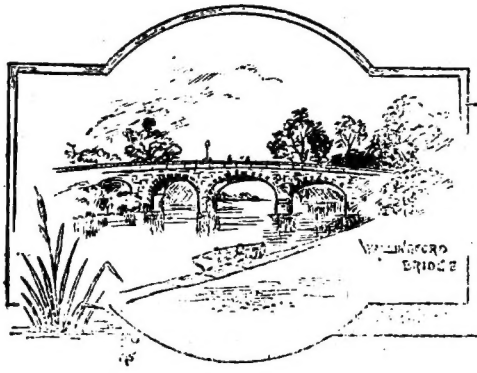

# HE STAKED HIS ALL.

"That is the Princess," said an old diplomatist, referring to a beautiful woman just entering the room, "whose husband won her at cards. She is seventy years of age, yet her figure is as straight, and her complexion as fresh as that of a girl of twenty. I will tell you the story, using fictitious names, of course. It is too well remembered for me to do otherwise, and occurred during my embassy to the Court of St. Petersburg during the reign of Nicholas.

"Nowhere in the world," he continued, "do they gamble as they gamble in Russia. Not only is it a passion which has its frenzy, but a luxury which carries with it obligations. An officer who doesn't play is regarded as beneath consideration, and a man who doesn't from time to time risk his entire fortune at cards, as a churlish fellow only worthy of contempt.

"Maria Feodorowna, *née* Princess of D——, rich, beautiful, accomplished, and maid of honour to the Tsarina, married the Prince Tcheretzoff for love. He was unquestionably devoted to her. Tcheretzoff was a capable officer, a major-general at the age when one is usually a lieutenant, an aide-de-camp to the Emperor An intelligent and earnest student, with excellent qualities of heart and person; he had one fault—he did not gamble.

"'Why is it, General,' said the Tsar to him one day, 'that you do not play? Come, take a game of preference with me.'

"Such had been Tcheretzoff's aversion to gambling, however, that he was obliged to confess his ignorance of the game.

"'What!' cried the Tsar, 'not know how to play? Here, Augustinoff,' addressing one of his staff, 'as past master of the art, take the imbecile and give him lessons.'

"A command as positive as this was not to be lightly regarded. Tcheretzoff found himself forced to submit. The Prince Augustinoff, to whose teachings the command of the Emperor had consigned him, was undoubtedly the most skilful player in Russia—cool, prudent, master of the game and of himself, the best guarantee of success.

"The Prince Augustinoff devoted himself to the task with zeal, and was even prodigal of lessons and counsels. In a short time Tcheretzoff became, under his tuition, an excellent player. He played from inspiration, according to his humour, sometimes winning, sometimes losing, but always sufficiently well to establish an even balance, an equilibrium of chances, as it were, which soon gained for him the reputation of the best player of the season.

"It would have been better for him had he lost; perhaps he would then have escaped the passion against which he had so long defended himself. Success intoxicated him, and card-playing became the occupation of his life. He would be seized with what for want of a better name, we will call frenzies of gambling, during which, forgetful of everything, he would pay someone to play with him if an adversary could be had in no other way. Unfortunately, such extreme measures are rarely necessary in Russia; adversaries are only too plentiful for all who want them.

"One day Tcheretzoff had been sitting at the gambling-table since two o'clock in the morning, winning steadily. Accumulated beside him were his gains, 100,000 roubles, and this did not include 200,000 more in the I.O.U's of his companions.

"'I mean,' said he, abruptly addressing the party, 'to stake everything that I have won this evening upon the chances of a single game.'

"'How much is that?' asked a gentleman, at that moment coming into the room.

"'Three hundred thousand roubles,' answered Tcheretzoff, turning at the sound of Augustinoff's voice —for it was he who had entered—'but why? Do you wish to play.'

"'Yes—I'll accept the challenge.' And seating himself at the table the game began.

"Although their comrades were accustomed to high play, circumstances combined to make the coming contest the most extraordinary on record. The stake was simply enormous, the contestants the best players of the empire, and though of late he had withdrawn from the list of those who regularly gambled, it was well known that Augustinoff had made an exception in favour of the man before him, in order to teach him, as far as possible, his own skill. The struggle between master and pupil excited the liveliest interest. For a while the game was undecided—the chances and skill being about even. At last a bold stroke of Augustinoff won. Tcheretzoff pushed towards him the money and the I.O.U.'s won from his former adversaries.

"'Now for my revenge,' he said, as, this adjustment made and accepted, they returned to the game.

"'For what amount do we play now?' demanded Augustinoff.

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"'The same—300,000 roubles.'

"'But——'

"'Isn't it enough?'

"'No! You have lost nothing as yet. The sums staked have been only the winnings of the evening; add more to it!'

"'Very well,' responded Tcheretzoff, 'I will add another hundred thousand roubles.'

"But this time Augustinoff lost.

"'We are not going to stop at that,' said he; 'I will play you for five hundred thousand roubles.'

"And fortune was with him.

"'Play on, play on!' cried Tcheretzoff hoarsely, the madness of the gamester shining in his eyes; 'I must have my revenge.'

"'As you please,' said Augustinoff quietly; 'but the stakes must remain at five hundred thousand roubles. I am in shape to-night and you will lose—I feel it.'

"Tcheretzoff was now in a terrible temper, a bad state of mind for a man who would win. Glass after glass of sparkling Cliquot, swallowed with feverish rapidity, instead of quieting him, served only to increase his irritable gloom. Calm, self-possessed, and trusting nothing to chance, Augustinoff opposed him with impassable phlegm—an impenetrable smile. Goaded to frenzy by this indifference, Tcheretzoff played wildly, losing game after game in quick succession. From the way things were going, not a kopeck of his immense fortune would be left.

"'Tis useless to urge me,' he replied, when they intreated him to stop; 'I shall remain until daybreak.'

"'So be it,' said Augustinoff; 'so be it. I will do likewise.'

"The struggle had now assumed a terrible aspect. It was no longer a simple game of cards, but a duel to the death. Each watched the other with the eye of a hawk, seeking to penetrate the secret of his play. Their looks burned, their hands trembled. Calculating chances, computing consequences, they fingered the cards with lightning speed, each striving thus to disconcert his adversary. A single mistake would have been irreparable. All at once Tcheretzoff paused and played hesitatingly. It was the beginning of the end.

"Before the light of day he had lost everything that he possessed, his Moscow palace, his beautiful lands in the central provinces, his magnificent château of Ukraine, the summer home of his wife, from which came the handsomest horses of the Empire. Everything had gone but the diamonds of the Princess Tcheretzoff, and these her husband knew well that he could not touch. His own jewels, even the jewels of his order, and a superb ring, a present from the Tsar, were already pledged.

"Staggering to his feet, Tcheretzoff paced restlessly up and down the hall. His body trembled, his muscles twitched convulsively; his appearance was that of a man in the throes of a mortal agony. Augustinoff, carelessly shuffling the cards and waiting for a new opponent to come and finish the game, still sat at the table. He rose, in astonishment, however, as Tcheretzoff, wheeling suddenly, resumed his place before him.

"'It is not daylight yet,' said Tcheretzoff quietly, as his adversary rose to go; 'the bond said until daylight.'

"'I know that, Tcheretzoff, but——'

"'Sit down, sit down, I say; you cannot go until daylight. Besides, I have something to say to you. Augustinoff,' said he abruptly, in a voice he struggled vainly to control, 'I believe that you love my wife. I know that you loved her as Maria Feodorowna—I believe that you love her still.'

"'Well,' said Augustinoff coldly.

"'I have nothing with which to maintain her, I stake her against all that you have won from me this evening. What say you? Shall it be?'

"Stake the Princess Tcheretzoff upon a game of cards! Augustinoff stood as if turned to stone. Tcheretzoff's misfortune had certainly driven him crazy.

"'What say you?' persisted Tcheretzoff. 'Shall it be?'

"'Yes,' said Augustinoff; 'yes, I accept.' And his eyes flashed like coals of fire. The cool impassive mask of the gamester dropped away—beneath it lay the secret of the soul 'I accept,' he repeated steadily, 'but upon two conditions: First, that I increase the stake upon my side; it is not sufficient. Second, you must pronounce the divorce and assume all responsibility Your wife is without stain, and not a shadow shall fall upon her.'

"'I agree,' said Tcheretzoff; 'and not a shadow shall fall upon her.'

"As they lifted the cards to begin anew, Augustinoff, seized with inexplicable emotion, hesitated. Should he re-open a combat where the woman he loved had been made the stake? Did he fear to lose her? Did he fear a disdainful refusal should the happiness of victory place her in his hands? Torn by these conflicting emotions he commenced the game.

"A profound silence reigned in the gaming-room, broken only by the rustling of the cards falling one upon another. Now and then a voice announced a point, and a counter glided softly upon the cloth to mark the play. Once in a while the adversaries stopped to draw breath, like wrestlers overcome with fatigue. Strength and skill seemed evenly balanced.

"All at once Tcheretzoff laid down his cards. The scale had tipped. A bold and hazardous stroke, which might have brought him victory, had only the more speedily determined his defeat. Then it was that this man, this reckless, desperate gambler, consumed for more than ten hours with the fever of play, resumed the dignity and nobility of the soldier.

"'You have won,' he cried, in a stifled voice. 'won all, but I hold to the engagement.'

"And stumbling to his feet, Tcheretzoff, saluting his opponent as they do when under arms, wheeled and passed from the room. The ghastliness of his face betrayed the torture that racked his heart, but neither he nor his companions dreamed of questioning the validity of the contract.

"The engagement was held to the end. Tcheretzoff was divorced, taking the responsibility upon himself, where it undoubtedly belonged, and the responsibility of the divorced husband in Russia is very great. Not only is he always fined, but frequently suffers imprisonment as well. His offence was great, but as the favourite aide-de-camp of the Tsar, Tcheretzoff was not imprisoned. He sought and obtained the privilege of going to fight the Caucasians. He went, but never returned."

"And the Princess Tcheretzoff?"

"Is now the Princess Augustinoff. Acquiescing in the act of her husband, she obeyed—perhaps with reluctance—the conditions of the challenge. And why not? The man who valued her enough to risk 12,000,000 of francs for her sake unquestionably loved and respected her more than the man who staked her upon a game of cards."

J. Gatesby Gale.

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# THE WYTHECOMBE MYSTERY

By JOHN K. LEYS, *author of "The Tenth of June," etc., etc.*

SUMMARY.

WHILE on a sketching tour in Wales, LAUNCELOT VERE gets into a dangerous position on the face of a precipice. His life is saved by WINIFRED DENVERS, to whom he becomes engaged. On the wedding morning LAUNCELOT fails to put in an appearance at church, and no news can be heard of him. Miss UNWIN, the village schoolmistress, has disappeared at the same time. HAROLD KENYON, a friend of LAUNCELOT'S, determines to leave Wythecombe in search of his friend, and goes to London. He finds that the missing man has drawn £75 from his bank, and also discovers several sketches of Miss UNWIN in the artist's room. PAUL SHENSTONE presses his suit with KATHERINE DALE, who unwillingly agrees to marry him in October. WINIFRED is still convinced of LAUNCELOT'S innocence of any foul play.

KATHERINE DALE, A young lady with whom HAROLD KENYON is in love.
PAUL SHENSTONE, Engaged to KATHERINE DALE.
REV. MARK DENVERS, Rector of Wythecombe, and WINIFRED'S father.
MR. BEAUMONT, A solicitor, and friendly with VERE.

## CHAPTER VI.

### WHAT THE RAILWAY GUARD HAD TO TELL.

HAROLD KENYON could not have been more anxious to set out for London at once, if his own honour, or his own life, had depended on the story the guard had to tell. But duty demanded that he should be at the bank at Darnport on Monday morning and remain there all day. He knew that already he had spent three days in trying to penetrate the darkness in which his friend's fate was shrouded; and he feared that if his employers knew how long he had stayed away from his post they might be disposed to blame him.

But on Monday afternoon he felt free once more; and he travelled up to London by the afternoon train. Next morning he left Paddington at six o'clock, so that the day was still young when he alighted at the little roadside station, where he expected to find Martin, the late guard of the Great Western day express. He had provided himself with a small album, in which were several portraits, among them being a photograph of Launcelot Vere. He had also taken with him the sketch of Miss Unwin's head, which he had found in Vere's studio.

Kenyon could hardly wait till the train had quitted the station before he sought out the station-master.

"I have come all the way from Devonshire," he began, "to ask you one or two questions. A porter told me you could give me some information."

*He alighted at the little roadside station.*

The ex-guard, a tall, burly fellow, with a red, good-humoured face, looked serious at once.

"You used to act as passenger-guard on the main line, didn't you?"

"Until last Saturday night."

"I have only to ask if you observed one of the passengers in the train you brought from Exeter to London last Tuesday—a young woman of rather striking appearance."

The man's face relaxed into a smile.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" he said. "I thought there had been a theft of luggage, maybe, or something of that sort. Yes, I did notice a young lady. Would I know her portrait? Perhaps I might."

Harold unrolled the sketch of Miss Unwin and held it up.

The station-master nodded.

"You've got her there, sir; and as handsome a face, to my mind, as ever I saw. That's the young lady, sure enough."

"Where did she join your train?" asked Kenyon.

"At Exeter—at least, I saw her there first. She asked me how long there was to wait, and whether she would have time to send a telegram. I said she might, but it would be better to write it on a scrap of paper if she could, and I would send it to the telegraph office for her. There was a chance that she might miss the train."

"Did she write the telegram?"

"She did, sir. But may I ask the object of these inquiries?"

"Perhaps you have not heard. A friend of mine has disappeared, and——"

"Oh, I see!"

The station-master smiled, as if he now quite understood the situation.

"Do you remember the name of the person to whom the telegram was sent?"

"Well," said the ex-guard, in a hesitating way; "it seems to me rayther doubtful if I should give that information. You see, the young lady sort of confided in me."

"If it were not sent to my friend I have no concern with it," said Harold hastily. "Would you remember the name if I told it you?"

"No; I don't think I should."

"Nor the purport of the message?"

Martin smiled, and hesitated.

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"I assure you," said Kenyon, "no harm of any kind is intended to the young lady. I have neither the power nor the will to injure her in any way whatever. If my friend has not eloped with her of course I have no concern with her. If he *has*—well, if he has, I shall have no further interest in either of them. *Now* do you feel at liberty to tell me what you know?"

"Perhaps your friend was a married man, sir?" asked the station-master, with a side look at his questioner.

"Something like it."

"I hope he wasn't the same gentleman, then, for *her* sake."

"Was the message something like this: 'I am coming by such a train'; or, 'Meet me at such an hour'?"

"Well, yes, I may say it was, sir."

"And you can't say positively whom the telegram was sent to?"

"No, I can't at this moment."

"When the train got to Paddington did anyone meet the young lady?"

Martin was silent.

Kenyon was almost beside himself with anxiety and impatience. But he controlled himself, and quietly assured the station-master that he was in no way connected with the young lady, and repeated that he had not the smallest desire to injure her. At last he succeeded in allaying the worthy man's scruples.

"I would be above playing the spy on any man, least of all on any woman," he said at length. "But I couldn't help noticing them. They came and stood close to where I was, and talked in a sort of whisper. Then they took a turn up the platform and back, still talking very earnest like; and then they came back and stood a little while, and then they went away together."

"In a cab?"

"No; walking. And now that's all I can tell, if you were to question me till doomsday."

"I can't tell you how sorry I am to give you all this trouble; but there is one thing more you can do for me. You noticed the gentleman, I suppose?"

Martin nodded, in an aggrieved kind of way.

"Will you kindly glance through these photographs, then, and see if you can identify any of them as his portrait."

Martin put his hands behind his back.

"It is only to ease my mind, and the minds of—the gentleman's friends. If you can't pick out a photograph, and say: 'That is the likeness of the man who met the young lady, whose portrait you showed me just now, at Paddington Station, and went away with her'—If you can't say: 'I can swear that is the man,'—I will at once trouble myself no more about the girl, but will search for my friend elsewhere. If you *do* recognise him, I will give myself no more concern about either of them."

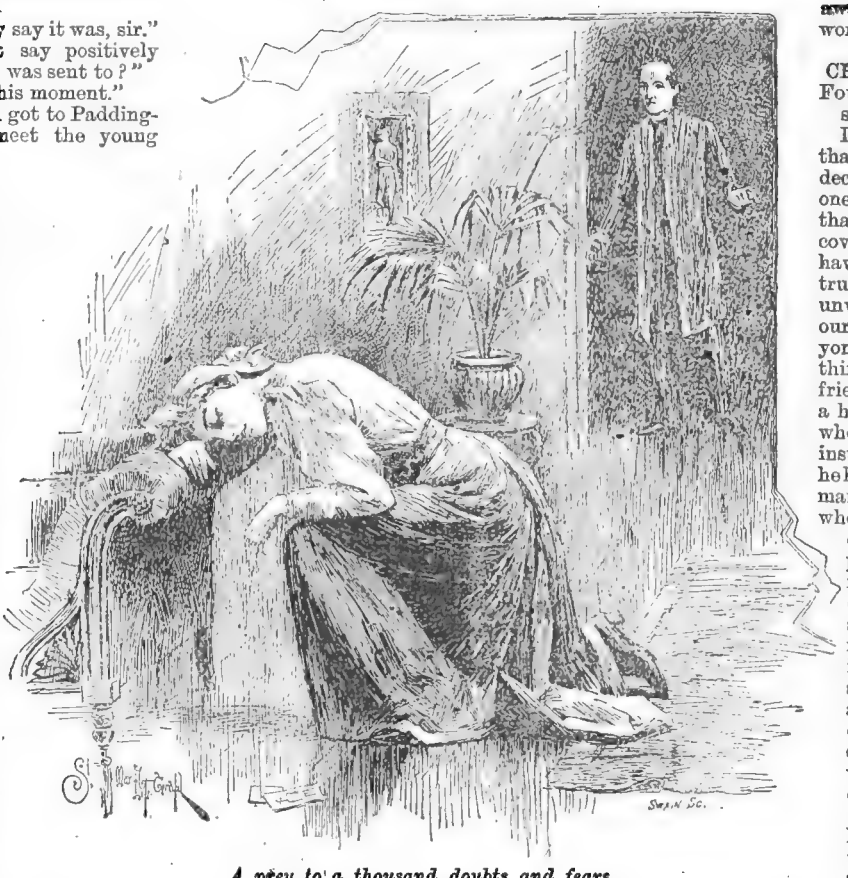
Thus reassured, Martin took the album. Kenyon's hand shook a little as he held it out to him.

One by one the leaves were turned, the eyes of both being fixed on the portraits as they successively came into view.

"That's the man!" said the station-master suddenly, pointing with his forefinger.

It was Launcelot Vere's portrait which he indicated.

Kenyon turned away without a word.



*A prey to a thousand doubts and fears.*

## CHAPTER VII.

### Found on Hampstead Heath.

It is sad to find that we have been deceived in any one, but it is more than sad to discover that one we have loved and trusted has been unworthy even of our regard. Kenyon could not think of his former friend now, but as a heartless wretch who had wantonly insulted the girl he had promised to marry—a coward who, rather than confess his pitiable weakness, had hidden himself away from his friends, leaving them to suffer whatever anxiety his conduct might cause them without a word of explanation.

And although he told himself that his own feelings were of no account, he could not but feel that Vere's disgrace was in some degree reflected upon himself. He had almost insulted Shenstone for suggesting that there might be a connection between Vere's sudden disappearance and that of Miss Unwin. He had in a sense made himself Vere's advocate. And now, what was he to say? How was he to face Katherine Dale or the indignant Rector? What message was he to send to the unhappy girl who was waiting for news, tortured by anxiety, and a prey to a thousand doubts and fears? Miss Denvers must be told the result of his inquiries, and she would, of course, draw the natural inference from the facts. Everyone must now advise her that the one thing she had to do was to strive to blot out Launcelot's image from her heart and his name from her memory. But, alas! would any such thing be possible for her now?

Before returning to London, Harold sent a telegram to

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*"Three-and-six to pay," said the man.*

Miss Dale, stating the result of his inquiries, and leaving it to her to tell the news to Winnie Denvers or not, as she might think best.

There was one thing Kenyon thought he would do before he went back to Devonshire, and that was to write a note to Vere, saying that the reason of his strange disappearance was no longer a secret to people at Wythecombe. Vere would be sure to come or send to his rooms sooner or later; and if the note reached him it might have the effect of averting trouble in the future.

It was not an easy letter to write. Harold felt that he could not address his former friend as one addresses a stranger; yet it was not his place to heap reproaches on his head. After many abortive attempts, he penned a note without any formal beginning or ending. It ran thus:

"The cause of your absence last Thursday has been ascertained. You have chosen your own course, and it is not for me to upbraid you. I defended you as long as it was possible. Of course I can do so no longer.

"Harold Kenyon."

This note Harold put into an envelope, which he sealed and addressed; and as the hotel at which he was staying was not far from Cumber Street, in which Vere's rooms were situated, he thought he might call there and leave it. It was barely possible that something might have transpired there since his last visit.

As he drew near the house he saw that a man with a handbarrow was at the door; and just as he ascended the steps the man took something bulky from his barrow and carried it to the house. Harold threw a careless glance at it. It was a brown portmanteau—the very portmanteau he had missed when he had examined Vere's rooms three days before.

"Where did you fetch that from, my man?" he asked eagerly.

The man stared at him, and rang the bell in silence.

"Can't you tell me? It is very important that I should know."

Still no answer.

The door opened, and the tenant of the house, who inhabited the lower flat, presented herself.

"Three-and-six to pay," said the man, handing her the portmanteau.

"The gentleman's not at home. You'll have to come back again," answered the woman.

The messenger without a word turned away, carrying the portmanteau with him.

"Here! I'll pay the money," Kenyon called out. "But you must tell me where you come from."

"Bell and Watson, Long Acre."

"How did you get this portmanteau?"

"Fetched it from here on Saturday week to have a new lock put on it. It was to have been sent back last Tuesday but we forgot it; that's a fact."

"Strange!" thought Kenyon, as the man went away, "Poor Launcelot must have yielded to some sudden, uncontrollable impulse. He seems to have made no preparations for his flight, except providing himself with money. I thought he had taken the portmanteau with him, but it is clear that I was mistaken."

He hesitated a moment as to whether he should leave the note he had written for Vere; but finally he did as he had intended, and left the house.

From Donegal Street, Kenyon went to the City, and called at the head office of the bank which he represented at Darnport, intending to explain to Mr. Bonnington, one of the partners, the reason of his having deserted his post for the last two or three days. Mr. Bonnington, however, was not in town that day; and as Kenyon much preferred to confide in him, he decided to defer his explanation for the present.

He was leaving the bank when he heard his own name pronounced from behind, while a hand was laid on his shoulder. He turned and beheld a small wrinkled old man, dressed in old-fashioned black clothes, with a long black silk stock, of the kind fashionable fifty years ago, wound round his throat. The old man's figure was thin and bent, but his eyes were bright, and his lips had that firm expression peculiar to men of energetic temperament.

Harold knew him well. His name was Daunt. He was a solicitor, one of the old-fashioned, steady-going sort who tread the fertile furrows of a conveyancing practice, back and forwards continuously, to their lives' end. Mr. Daunt was one to whom men had recourse when they were in difficulty, and to whom men seldom had recourse in vain. He had held out a helping hand to Harold Kenyon when he was beginning the struggle of life, a fact which Harold gratefully remembered.

"Well, how are you getting on at Darnport?" he asked when the two had shaken hands.

"Pretty well, thank you. I have no reason to complain."

The old man looked at him with his shrewd eyes.

"You are in trouble about something, I see," he observed. "Not a love affair, eh?"

"I have been much perplexed about a friend of mine, who has gone off somewhere without a moment's warning on the very eve of his wedding."

"Repented of his bargain probably," said the old lawyer, with a grin.

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"No," said Harold; "I don't think that was the reason."

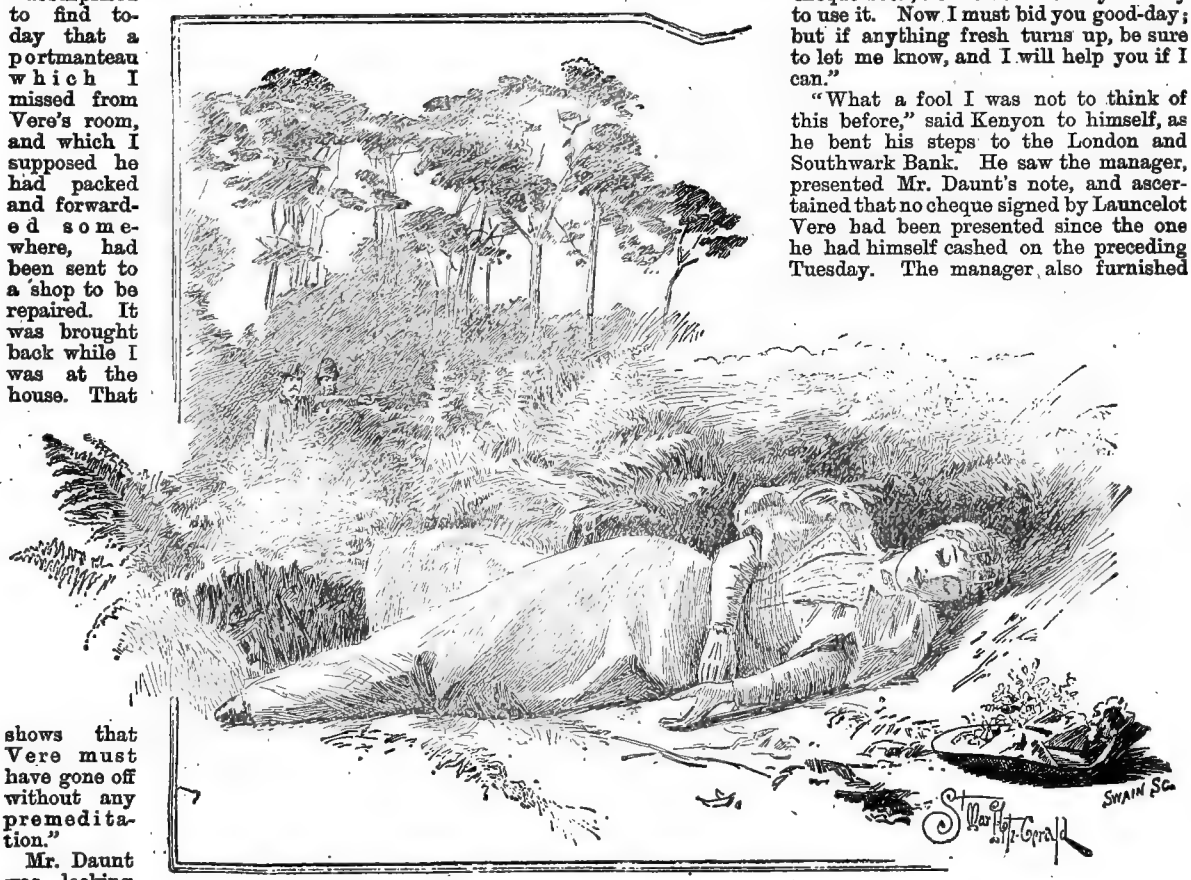
"Eh? What else could make him play a trick of that sort? Head over ears in debt, perhaps, and nothing to pay the honeymoon expenses with."

"No; he drew seventy-five pounds from the bank the day he disappeared."

"Indeed! Come up to my office and tell me about it."

Harold was only too glad to accept this offer. Mr. Daunt led him to a small room, furnished with queer old-fashioned hair-cloth chairs and Pembroke tables, and seated him by the fire. The narrative was not a long one, and Harold ended it by saying:

"The guard's testimony seemed to me conclusive; but I was surprised to find to-day that a portmanteau which I missed from Vere's room, and which I supposed he had packed and forwarded somewhere, had been sent to a shop to be repaired. It was brought back while I was at the house. That shows that Vere must have gone off without any premeditation."




*The body of a young woman had been found on Hampstead Heath.*

Mr. Daunt was looking steadily into the fire. He seemed to be weighing the matter over in his mind. He offered no remark.

"What do you think of it, sir?" Harold asked.

"I think nothing at all as yet," he said snappishly.

Harold waited in patience and in silence for some minutes.

"Has it ever struck you that your friend may have done something that made it necessary to hide himself?" he asked.

"Never! Launcelot was not a man to commit crimes."

"Hum! Or he may have met with foul play. If he had that seventy-five pounds in his pocket that would be temptation enough for many a London rough. Did you find a cheque-book among your friend's papers?" Mr. Daunt added after a short pause.

"No, I didn't."

"He probably had it in his pocket. You had better go to the manager of his bank. Do you know where he banked?"

"At the London and Southwark."

"Very good. I will give you a note to the manager. Ascertain from him the number of the notes paid to your friend on the day of his disappearance, and these numbers you can afterwards send to Scotland Yard. Find out also from the manager whether any more cheques have been drawn since that day, and beg him to let you know whenever another cheque comes in. If your friend is in hiding he will be sure to want more money before long. If he has been robbed the thieves will not have overlooked the cheque-book, and ten to one they will try to use it. Now I must bid you good-day; but if anything fresh turns up, be sure to let me know, and I will help you if I can."

"What a fool I was not to think of this before," said Kenyon to himself, as he bent his steps to the London and Southwark Bank. He saw the manager, presented Mr. Daunt's note, and ascertained that no cheque signed by Launcelot Vere had been presented since the one he had himself cashed on the preceding Tuesday. The manager also furnished Kenyon with the numbers of the notes handed to Vere on that occasion, and promised to communicate with him if any cheque purporting to be signed by Vere should be handed in for payment.

It was almost closing time when Harold left the bank. The street lamps were already lit, and the newsboys were shouting out the names of the evening journals.

"Murder of a woman on 'Ampstead 'Eath!" cried an urchin, thrusting his paper into Harold's face. Harold bought the journal, and turned into a restaurant to get some dinner. As he waited for his meal he opened the paper in his hand, and his eye fell on a paragraph headed

MURDER OR SUICIDE—WHICH?

He read it through without any special emotion. It was such a paragraph as one meets with too often in a London

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newspaper. The body of a young woman, well-dressed, and of attractive appearance, had been found on Hampstead Heath. It was impossible to say how many hours the poor girl's body had been lying there. A revolver was found beside it; and the natural inference would have been that the unfortunate girl had taken her own life, but for two circumstances. The first was that women very seldom shoot themselves; they drown or poison themselves when they are bent on self-destruction. The second was that the dress was not scorched, as it would almost certainly have been if the girl had held the pistol with her own hand when it was fired. There were no letters or other documents found on the young woman's person; but there was a photograph in a small leather case—the photograph of a gentleman. And the linen worn by the girl was marked J. U.

When he read these concluding lines, Harold started from his seat. J. U.! He did not know Miss Unwin's Christian name; but U. was an unusual initial. He must know at once whether this murdered girl was Miss Unwin or not; he felt sure he could recognise her from the sketches and the picture he had found in Launcelot's study.

Throwing the price of his untasted dinner on the table, Harold hurried from the restaurant, hailed a hansom, and was soon being rapidly carried to the place where the body lay.

A woman was sobbing in a corner of the room.

"Her mother, sir," whispered a policeman.

"Then you know the poor thing's name?"

"Yes, sir. We know it now—Jane Unwin."

The man drew down a corner of the sheet, and Harold threw a pitying glance at the cold face that lay beneath it. It was the same face as that depicted in the sketches and the finished portrait which Harold had seen.

"Did you know the young lady, sir?" asked the policeman.

And Harold was glad to be able to answer:

"No; I never saw her to my knowledge."

*"Did you know the young lady, sir?"*

The constable turned to re-arrange the sheet; and as he did so Harold caught sight of a photograph in a brown leather case. The man's back was still turned; the weeping mother had hidden her eyes in her handkerchief.

Harold stole one look at the photograph.

It was Launcelot Vere, with a smile upon his face.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### At the Inquest.

Bewildered, sick at heart, Kenyon turned away and left the building.

He had searched in every corner for a plausible explanation for Vere's conduct—for something that might prove that he was not the unprincipled scoundrel people imagined him to be—and this was the result! He shuddered when he thought of that poor creature's lifeless body, lying there desolate and despised, mutely appealing for pity and for vengeance. He was glad to think that it would not be necessary for him to appear at the inquest.

When he got back to his hotel he found a telegram from the bank asking him to remain in town for another day or two, and, of course, he delayed his departure accordingly. Next morning, however, he was told, when he called at the bank, that his services would not be required until the following day.

*"She is my daughter—my only child."*

As Kenyon, with nothing particular to do, strolled slowly westward, he recollected that the inquest on the body of Jane Unwin was to be held that forenoon; and he thought it possible that if he attended the inquiry as a spectator he might learn something about Vere, and find out why he had chosen the eve of his wedding as the moment of his elopement. He no longer felt for Vere anything of the painful anxiety he had felt up to Tuesday morning. He believed—he could not doubt—that the man was a murderer. Yet he was curious, even anxious, to hear something about him. Had he been discovered, or was he still in hiding? If he had been found, would he be taken into custody at once on suspicion? Would he confess that he had shot the poor girl, or would he deny his guilt?

Harold, in spite of his changed feelings towards Vere, was naturally anxious to learn what had happened, and what might be expected to befall his former friend, and he determined to go to Hampstead and ascertain what was going on.

There were one or two things which he had to attend to before setting out for "The Spaniards," where the inquest was to be held. He had to send a message to the bank, and call for a moment at his hotel.

While in the hotel it occurred to him that he had seen an empty case, which might belong to a revolver, in Launcelot Vere's sitting-room. If he could get hold of the revolver that had been found beside Miss Unwin's body, and try whether it fitted this empty case, he would have a strong proof of Vere's guilt, or, on the other hand, a piece of evidence in favour of his innocence. From the hotel to Vere's rooms was but a step. Kenyon went there, took possession of the empty case, and slipped it into the outer pocket of his overcoat. Then he took a train to Hampstead.

When Harold entered the room in which the inquiry was being held, a tall, gaunt woman with iron-grey hair was in the act of taking the oath.

"Your name is Maria Unwin?" asked the Coroner.

The woman bowed.

"And you are a widow, I believe?"

The witness hesitated for a moment.

"I am not a widow," she said, "although I have passed as one for some years. I have lived apart from my husband and earned my own living."

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"Well—you have seen the body of the deceased girl. Do you recognise her?"

"She is my daughter—my only child."

"Did she live with you?"

"Only when she happened to be out of a situation, or during the holidays."

"What was her occupation?"

"She was a schoolmistress. She had a situation as parish schoolmistress at Wythecombe, near Darnport."

"When did you see her last?"

"At the Easter holidays. I am housekeeper to a Mr. Gordon, and I got permission for my daughter to stay with me during the holidays."

"You are sure you have not seen your daughter since?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"When did you hear from her last?"

"About a month ago."

"Was there anything in that letter, or in her previous letters, to lead you to suppose that she was in trouble of any kind?"

Again the witness hesitated.

"I thought she was unhappy, but she did not tell me the reason."

"Do you know the reason?"

No answer.

"Come, now, Mrs. Unwin. I am sorry to press you; but really we must get at the truth. Had your daughter a love affair?"

"Not for some time—not since last year."

The Coroner paused a moment. He then took the photograph which had been found on the body of Jane Unwin, and put it into witness's hands.

"Do you recognise that face?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Whose portrait is it?"

"Mr. Vere's."

"Where does he live?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Do you know his Christian name?"

"Launcelot."

"Where did your daughter meet him?"

"At the house of Mr. Pascoe, my last employer," explained Mrs. Unwin, who answered the questions put her very straightforwardly.

"When was that?"

"Last summer—I mean the summer of last year. My daughter was in weak health, and she left her situation, as the work was too hard for her, perhaps two months before the midsummer holidays. She spent these two months, and also the holiday time, about three months altogether, with me. Of course, I had permission from Mr. Pascoe. She helped me with the housekeeping and needlework."

"Just so. Now, this Mr. Vere. Was he a relation of your employer?"

"No, sir. Mr. Pascoe had no relations that I ever heard of, except Mr. Abbot, his nephew. But Mr. Vere was a good deal about the house. He used to stay for two or three weeks at a time, especially if he had a picture to paint."

"Oh! Mr. Vere is an artist, then?"

*"I burnt it soon after reading it."*

"Yes, sir."

"Were he and your daughter thrown much together?"

"Not unless—only when she sat as a model."

"Did that happen frequently?"

"Pretty often. My daughter was handsome, and she had a fine figure. Mr. Vere drew her face dozens of times."

"Now, Mrs. Unwin, I cannot avoid asking you this: Was there any question of love or marriage between these two?"

At this plain—brutally plain—question Mrs. Unwin's tears burst out afresh. A more skilful examiner could have elicited all that was necessary without the slightest trouble; but the Coroner was a medical man, with very limited ideas as to the mode of conducting a judicial inquiry. For a time nothing could be heard in the room but the mother's sobs, with a running accompaniment of apparently impertinent questions, repeated over and over again in the harsh voice of the Coroner. By-and-bye she made answers of some sort, and the coroner obligingly pieced her answers together after this sort of way:

"So it comes to this, my good woman—Mr. Vere paid your daughter some attentions, and seemed to be in love with her. You began to fear that your daughter's good name would be compromised, or, at all events, that her peace of mind might be destroyed, and you insisted on her taking the post that was offered her at Wythecombe, so as to be out of harm's way. Is that what you would say?"

"Yes, sir. That's quite correct."

"Do you know whether your daughter and Mr. Vere corresponded?"

"That I can't tell."

"Or whether they had met lately?"

"I fancied, from a chance expression in Jane's last letter, that Mr. Vere had either met her, or written to her, not long ago."

"Have you the letter here?"

"No; I burnt it soon after reading it. It seemed unimportant at the time."

"Do you know when your daughter left Wythecombe?

"No, sir, I don't."

"Nor where she stayed the night before last?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know whether she has seen Mr. Vere since she left her situation?"

"I think——"

"Never mind what you think. Is there anything that you have seen or heard from which you could infer that they had met, or that they had not met?"

"Nothing whatever, sir. Jane was always rather close about her own affairs; I was left to guess at the state of matters between her and Mr. Vere. She never told me that he had said he loved her, or had promised to marry her; but I thought he was fond of her in a way."

The poor woman again broke down; and the coroner said the court would adjourn for half-an-hour.

*(To be continued.)*

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# A MADMAN'S STORY.

I HAVE succeeded. This was very easy however. My purpose was this: to commit a crime, to profit by it and go unpunished, a concise programme that I have filled to the letter. I will relate it to you. I believe I am justified in saying I displayed some ingenuity.

First the crime, *voici*. I had espoused a girl without fortune. I was a simple employé at two thousand two hundred francs per year, but I was very content. My tastes were always modest. My wife, who was an orphan, had one sister. Marie and Blanche, two pretty names. I had espoused Marie. Blanche lived with us. All went well. At first a son, and then a daughter. My salary was increased to three thousand francs, and I had nothing of which to complain.

One day a notary wrote to me. I was greatly surprised. I had had, I avow, little relation with these honourable gentlemen. My surprise increased when the worthy notary informed me that a merchant of Calcutta, uncle to my wife and her sister, had died and left them a heritage of a million francs.

That is to say, five hundred thousand francs each—barabi—bibari—hold! why do I write this, now—bira—biba—a half million for my wife.

* * * * *

The inheritance was promptly arranged. I had an income of twenty-five thousand francs; that is a handsome figure, is it not? My sister-in-law had an equal share. We put the house on a good footing at once—domestics, carriages, etc. I have always loved the arts. I bought choice pictures and statuary. For the first time in my life I patronised a fashionable tailor. I had an air *tout-à-fait distingué*, I assure you. My hand is elegant, my foot is small, and all the ladies envied me my luxuriant locks. I am what is called a handsome man; only at the end of a very short time I felt profoundly vexed that half a million had fallen to my sister-in-law. It would have been a genuine satisfaction—I dissimulate not—to have the million entire, since I was charged with a wife and children, and this old woman had no one but herself to look after, don't you see?

Then the idea came to me to kill her. My wife was her sole inheritor. Her sister dispatched, the million would come to us intact and I could put it to good use. *Voilà*, that is what I said to myself that evening in chatting with the two sisters. Then I resolved to assassinate Blanche. Only, being intelligent, I searched means to commit this crime without any danger. I read all the collections of *causes célèbres*, and I soon came to the conclusion that assassins were almost invariably betrayed by the very care which they took to conceal their criminal intentions. Barabi—bibari. Singular, these syllables always running through my head and springing to my lips without my knowing why.

I have always had a weakness for reading scientific works, particularly those that treat of medicine. I read the "Manual of Hallucinations" of Brière de Boismont, "La Folie" of Movel, "La Crime et La Folie" of Mandeley. It was in the latter book that I found the outline of a plan very ingenious and very useful in my emergency. And this is what I did:

One morning I went to the office of Dr. Laussedat, the most renowned specialist in brain disorders of modern times. He received me very politely, and I said to him: "Doctor, I come to make a terrible avowal. I am rich; I am happy; I adore my wife and children. I have no cause to hate any person on the face of the earth. Nevertheless, I sometimes find myself in a frightful state."

I spoke in a dry sort of tone, the eyes a little widened, and my lips contracted at intervals.

"Proceed," he said.

I bowed my head, and in a hollow voice continued:

"Sometimes, when I am in the midst of my family, I am all at once seized with an insane desire to kill someone. There succeeds, within myself, a terrible combat. I feel my hands involuntarily attracted towards the knife that is beside me at the table. Whom should I wish to slay? I know not. My wife, my children, my sister-in-law? In my hideous nightmare I should not choose. I resist some time, fearing that one might read in my eyes the horrible secret that haunts me. I close my hands and bury the nails in my flesh to arouse myself.

"At the commencement a physical impression was sufficient to dissipate this hallucination. Without attracting attention I arose and went to my chamber. A dash of cold water on the forehead restored calm. The spectre disappeared and I returned smiling.

"But for some time now the attacks have been more and more frequent. I realise that resistance of will and reason becomes daily more and more feeble. I begin to fear that some fatal day I may throw myself upon one of those I love and plunge a knife into her heart. Doctor, I have come to you to make a confession—I fear myself—you are the only one that is able to save me."

M. Laussedat listened to me with the utmost attention.

"Tell me," said he, "have you not remarked some symptoms premonitory to these attacks?"

"Yes, indeed," I responded. "At first there is a heaviness of the head, as if my brain was too weighty, and rolled about in the skull, and after that a compression of the chest, a contraction of the heart, and other peculiar sensations."

"It is well," said the Doctor. "I assure you that your case is one that can be easily cured. Follow exactly the treatment that I am about to prescribe, and I will answer for the result."

He wrote a long prescription which I took away after thanking him in the most earnest manner. Bibari—babari—bu—ba—bi—*Tenez!* this refrain annoys me.

I followed punctiliously—in appearance, you understand—the instructions of the Doctor. My room was encumbered with phials. My wife became uneasy. I reassured her the best that I was able. But from time to time I fixed a haggard look upon her. She questioned me. I replied evasively. I allowed three months to pass. At the end of that time I sought the Doctor again.

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"*Eh bien!*" he cried as soon as he perceived me. "I hope you have chased away the black butterflies."

I burst into tears. I was a victim of fatality. In place of being cured these attacks had become more and more frequent. Sometimes I shut myself up at home, sometimes I took long walks about the city, the fatigue aiding to calm me. But the wave mounted, mounted. I had something on the lips like the taste of blood!

"Monsieur," I finally said to him, "I come to ask you a great service."

"Command me," he replied in a tone of commiseration.

"I implore you to cause me to be inclosed in a retreat for the insane."

He seemed to be surprised beyond measure at my request.

"And to what end?" he asked.

"I know," said I, "*I know* that I am on the eve of a terrible crisis. The symptoms that I have enumerated to you are more violent than ever and more frequent. To-morrow, perhaps, I shall do some great harm, I feel certain. Order me to be confined. I shall be treated as one insane, by *douches*, the strait-jacket. I wish to be cured," I cried, sobbing. "Aid me—save me!"

The eminent practician was moved. This physiological subject interested him. I continued:

"Only, not to disquiet my family, I wish them to remain ignorant of the horrible extremity to which I am reduced. I will pretend that business requires a journey of two or three months. I will disappear during that period, writing home whenever the lucidity of my mind will permit. Then, when the treatment, energetic in the extreme, restores my normal condition, I will return home and resume my place at the family fireside, certain this time not to redden it with blood."

The Doctor felt my pulse, sounded my chest, and studied the play of my internal organs, and finally declared that I was right in my determination. I had no *lésion* of the brain; my case was simply an affection of the nerves that would speedily yield to seclusion and treatment. He consented to lend himself to the deceit I meditated. He would place me in a *maison de santé*, of which he was the chief director, feeling sure that in a few weeks my mental equilibrium would be restored.

I returned home and had no trouble in persuading my wife of the necessity for a journey. She had remarked certain inquietudes, certain *bizarreries* that change of scene and surroundings would dispel, she said.

The next day I entered the *maison de santé*—barabi—bibari. It was luxurious and well located. It was very expensive but—barabi. That cursed refrain! It maddens me! And why? why?

I remained there three months. At the end of a fortnight I simulated a violent excess of delirium. I threw myself upon one of the assistants and nearly strangled him. Afterwards I underwent the punishment of the *douche*, twisting myself about like a man in convulsions. Then I became calm, and little by little resumed my natural state. I was watched constantly for six weeks. Not one day did Monsieur Laussedat fail to pay me a visit, and soon he reported a sensible amelioration in my condition. I laughed a low laugh all within myself. Those wise doctors!

I knew he was very much flattered because the case fitted exactly with a pet theory of his regarding the cure of the insane by an exercise of their own will. He felicitated me on my energy, and encouraged me to persevere. For my part I exhibited an exemplary docility. I kept carefully in the current of the imaginary symptoms which pronounced my cure to be near at hand and definite.

One day the Doctor said to me that I could return to my family without apprehension. I asked that I might remain another month to make sure, and he granted my request, adding, however, that it was a useless precaution.

Finally I accepted my liberty and returned home. My wife and sister-in-law, my children and friends fêted my arrival. I avowed half the truth to them—told them I had gone to follow a treatment for an affection of the lungs, of which I had not spoken, fearing to alarm them, but that I was entirely convalescent. The fact was I never looked better in my life.

Hold! Where am I now? Barabi—bi—bu—ba—bibari—one, two, three—bibari! There is something the matter with my head.

* * * * *

Four months after I had resumed my place at the *table de famille*, my sister-in-law being seated at my left, I plunged a knife into her heart—then, raising frightful shrieks, I rolled upon the floor. The outburst endured—appeared to endure—five minutes or more, when I came to myself and began to weep.

I was arrested. No one except M. Laussedat was able to suspect the cause of my crime. Just at the moment of the catastrophe, for which I had carefully selected the hour, the Doctor was absent from Paris, so that the investigation followed its course.

To the question of the magistrate, I replied that I had acted without volition in the affair, under the impulse of a passion that I was not able to withstand. Naturally, it was responded that I simulated insanity. Then, as though yielding to shame, I spoke of M. Laussedat. He was hurriedly summoned.

With a loyalty that I had well counted on, he told all that had passed. He spoke of my frankness, of which I had given so many proofs, of the superhuman efforts that I had made to control the fatal malady, and of my voluntary sojourn at the *maison de santé*.

Homicidal monomania was only too evident. The great *aliénists*, Esquiros and Penel, had reported some observations identified with my case. (I knew it well, because it was upon these observations that I had constructed my plan.)

When the trial came on I was unanimously acquitted, only the Tribunal decided that, by way of precaution, I should be confined in a *maison de santé* during a period of whose duration the *médecins aliénists* should be the judges.

In the meantime, my wife had inherited from her sister. The million was ours, and no one dreamed how it was done!

M. Laussedat had declared to the Tribunal that, according to all appearances, the explosion of this crisis did not preclude a final cure, and I was shut up in a mad house.

Here I am—I laugh—they have kept me here nearly a year. A year for five hundred thousand francs? That is not much. Barabi—what signifies—bibari—bu—how I fooled them all. Hi! hi! hi biba—bara—I am thirsty—Hum! hum!—a frog!—the Doctor swallowed my story easily, didn't he?—barabi—Acknowledge that it was well conceived. Hé! hé! hé! bibi—babi—I fooled them with my pretended lunacy—courage—biba—is necessary—ribiba. Suppose the lunacy should—ribari—bib—what's that?—a dragon! a coiling cobra about to strike! Help! help! I'm mad! I'M MAD!

Honor Lucelle.

Google

# LEGENDS OF WOLFVILLE.

BY "DAN QUINN."

*Wolfville is a Cattleman's Settlement in Arizona, and the Characters in these Legends are Cowboys.*

## No. II.—The Cactus.

"The Cactus" was the name bestowed upon her in Wolfville. Her signature, if she had written it, would probably have been Mollie Prescott, at least such was the declaration of Rosewood Jim.

"I sees this yere female a year ago in Tombstone," asserted that veracious chronicler, "where she cooks at the stage station, an' she gives it out cold she's called Prescott—Mollie Prescott—an' most likely she knows her name, an' knowed it a year ago."

As Rosewood was a historian of known petulance, no one cared to challenge either his facts or his conclusions; so the real name of "The Cactus" was accepted by the Wolfville public as Prescott.

"The Cactus" was a personable lady, comely and round, and her advent into Wolfville society had caused something of a flutter. Her mission was to cook, and in the fulfilment of her destiny she presided over the range at the O.K. Hotel. Being publicly hailed as "The Cactus" seemed in nowise to depress her, and it is possible she even felt a secret glow over an epithet which was meant by the critical taste that awarded it to illustrate those thorns in her nature which repelled and held in check the amorous male of Wolfville.

Women were jewellery in Wolfville, and on her first coming "The Cactus" had many admirers. Every man in the camp loved her the moment she stepped from the Tucson stage six months before. From the term "every man," however, a careful writer would except Rosewood Jim. That obdurate scientist, given as he was to the investigation of the inner workings of faro as a philosophy, had no time for such a soft and dulcet affair as love. Another thing, Rosewood had scruples of honour born of his business.

"Life behind a deal-box is a mighty sight too fantastic," quoth the thoughtful Rosewood, "for a family. It does well enough for single-footers, which it don't make much difference with when a player pulls his six-shooter an' sends 'em shoutin' home to heaven some abrupt. But there ain't no room for a woman with a man who turns cards as a pursoot. Priests and gamblers ain't got no business with squaws."

As time went on, the scores of lovers who sighed on the daily trail of "The Cactus" dwindled down to two. The rest gave out dispirited.

"I'm clean strain enough," said Bill Tutt, in apologetic description of his failure to persevere, "but I knows when I've got through. I'll play a game to a finish, but when it's down to the turn, an' my last chip's gone over to the dealer, why I shoves my chair back an' quits. An' it's about that a-way of an' concernin' my love for this yere Cactus girl. I jest can't get her none, an' that settles it. I now drors out an' gives my seat to someone else."

"That's whatever," said a personage known as Texas Joe, who was an interested listener to the defeated Mr. Tutt, "an' you can gamble I'm with you on them views. I loves 'The Cactus' myself to a frightful degree, an' thar's times I jest goes about whinin' for her; but yere awhile back I comes projectin' around her kitchen, an' 'bing!' comes a skillet at my head, an' that lets me out. You bet I don't pursoo them explorations round her no more. I don't want to get my rope on to no woman who is that callous as to heave kitchen *bric-à-brac* at a heart that's pantin' for her."

Two lovers still knelt at the shrine of "The Cactus." These were hailed by the men of Wolfville respectively as Rice Brown and Riley Brooks. A description of one would have been a portrait of the other. They were young, good-looking, of the breezy south-western type; tanned as to face, and lithe and limber as black snakes as to person. These still held the affections of "The Cactus" in siege and demanded capitulation, without, however, making much apparent impression.

Still it was possible that "The Cactus" was a shade less thorny in her treatment of Rice Brown and Riley Brooks than of any of the others. Perhaps she was becoming tired out. Be the reason what it may, these two persisted when the others failed, and at last were recognised as rivals.

"All I'm afraid of," said old man Armstrong, the head of the local vigilance committee, "is that these yere young bucks 'll take to pawin' 'round for trouble with each other. As the upshot of sech doin's would most likely be the stringin' of the survivor by the Wolfville committee on lariats, these yere nuptials, which now looks some feasible, would be clean busted an' the camp get a set-back jest that much. I wish this yere maiden would tip her hand in this to some discreet gent, so a play could be made in advance to get the wrong man outen the way. Whatever do you think you'se'f, Rosewood?"

"It's a delicate deal," said that sapient cardist, "to go tamperin' round a young female for the secrets of her soul, but I shorely deems it a crisis an' public interest demands somethin' is done. These yere boys is growing mighty hostile of each other, which I notes last night over in the Gold Mine Saloon, where they was paintin' up for war, an' onless we all interferes yere, it's my jedgment some of this yere love-makin' 'll come off in the smoke."

"Thar oughter be a nact of Congress," said Tutt the pessimist, "agin love-making in the Far West, an'

the East should be kept for sech purposes speshul, same as reservations for Injuns. The Western climate's too exyooberant for love-makin'."

"S'pose me an' you an' Tutt yere goes over to this young female, an' all polite an' congenial like, we ups an asks her intentions?" continued Armstrong, in an interrogative way, to Rosewood.

"Excuse me, pards," says Tutt, with sad earnestness, "but I don't think I wants cards in this at all. 'The Cactus' is a mighty spirited lady, an' you all recalls as how I've been pesterin' some 'round her in the past myself, for which reason, with others, she might take my comin' on sech errants derisive an' bang me over the fore'erd with a dipper or some sech objectionable play. So I reckon I better keep out of this yere embassy a whole lot. I ain't aimin' to shirk nuthin', but it'll be a heap more shore to win if I do."

"Tutt ain't onlikely to be plenty right about this," said Rosewood, "an' I reckon, Armstrong, we all better take this trick ourselves."

The mission was not a success. When the worthy pair of peace preservers appeared in the presence of "The Cactus" and made the inquiries noted, it excited the scorn and ire of that retiring damsel beyond the power of words to describe.

"What be you all doin' in my kitchen?" she asked, her young face flushed with rage and noonday cooking. "Who sent you all canterin' over yere to me with these insultin' questions, anyhow? I demand to know at ter once."

"And yere," said Rosewood, in relating the exploit in the Gold Mine Saloon immediately afterwards, "she stamps her foot like a buck antepole, an' lets fly a stove-griddle at us, an' all with a proud, high air, which reminds me a mighty sight of a goddess."

At the time it would seem the two attempted an apologetic explanation of their presence, and made efforts to point out to "The Cactus" the crying public need of some decision on her part.

"You don't want these two young male persons to take to shootin' of each other all up none, do you?" said Armstrong.

"I want you two men to get outen my kitchen," replied "The Cactus" vigorously, "an' I wants you to move some hurried, too. Don't never let me find your mocassin tracks 'round this yere water-hole no more, or I'll turn in an' mark you up a whole lot."

"Yere, you," she continued, as they were about to leave, something cast down by the conference, "you all can tell that Riley Brooks an' Rice Brown if they're blamed fools enough to go makin' a gun play over me, to make it and make it hard. Tell 'em I can pick my man out when the smoke blows away."

"Tutt's way right about 'The Cactus' bein' some spirited," said Armstrong, as the two walked away.

"She's shore spirited, an' that's a fact," mused Rosewood, in assent.

The result of the talk with "The Cactus" found its way about in Wolfville, and in less than an hour bore its hateful fruit.

The peaceful quiet of the Gold Mine Saloon, which, as a rule, heard no harsher note than the clatter of a stack of chips, was suddenly broken.

"You all who ain't interested yere better take to a lower limb."

It was the voice of Riley Brooks. The trained instinct of the Wolfville public at once fathomed the trouble, and proceeded to hide its many heads behind barrels, tables, counter, and any place which promised refuge from the bullets. All but one, and that one was Rice Brown.

He knew it meant him the moment Riley Brooks uttered the first syllable, and his pistol came to the front with a brevity born of long practice. His rival's was already there, and so the shooting began. As result, Mr. Brooks received a serious injury, which crippled his good right arm for many a day, while Mr. Brown was picked up with a wound in the side which even the sentiment of Wolfville, inured to such things and inclined to optimism at all times, admitted as dangerous.

"Well," said Armstrong, after the duellists had been cared for at the O.K. House, "yere we be again an' nuthin' settled. Yere we has all this shootin' an' all this blood-lettin', an' the camp gets all torn up; an' still thar's jest as many of these yere people now as there was before, an' most likely the whole deal to go over again."

"I shorely abominates things a-splittin' even this away," said Rosewood, "but Wolfville must b'ar its burdens same as other camps. It can't be he'ped none."

The next day the two duellists were still in bed. A new phase was given the affair when "The Cactus," clothed in purple and fine linen, and with two red roses in her straw hat, took the stage for Tucson. The management of the O K. House reported, in deference to the excited state of the Wolfville mind, that "The Cactus" would return in a week.

"Goin' for her wedding troosoe, most likely," said Armstrong, as he gazed after the stage.

"Let's drink to the hope she gets a red dress," said Tutt. "Set out all your bottles, barkeeper, an' don't leave nary man out. You bet red is my favourite colour."

No one seemed to know the intentions of "The Cactus." The shooting had in no wise disturbed her. That may have been her obdurate heart or it may have come from a familiarity with the evanescent tenure of human life born of long years on the border. Be that as it may, she experienced not the least concern touching the condition of her brace of lovers upstairs, and took the stage without even saying good-bye to them or anyone else.

"An' some fools say women is talkers," said Rosewood in high disgust.

Three days later Old Scotty, the stage driver, came in with startling news. "The Cactus" had married a man in Tucson, and would bring him to Wolfville in a week.

"When I first hears of it," said Old Scotty, with a groan, "an' when I thinks of them two pore boys a-layin' in Wolfville, an' their rights being trifled with that a-way I shorely thinks I'll take my Winchester an' go an' stop them rites a whole lot; but, pards, the Tucson marshal wouldn' have it. So she nails him, an' I hears in a saloon over thar she's been aimin' to marry him before she ever hops into Wolfville at all. I sees him afterwards, an' he's a little, measly-lookin' prairie dog, an' from his looks he couldn't get a job clerkin' in a store."

"Thar you be," said Armstrong. "Another case of woman's inhumanity to man. However, if 'The Cactus' has done gone a-fluttin' from her perch in this yere fashion, just the same we must prance 'round an' give her a high old time on her return. The honour of the camp bein' concerned, of course we whoops it up in style."

And they did.

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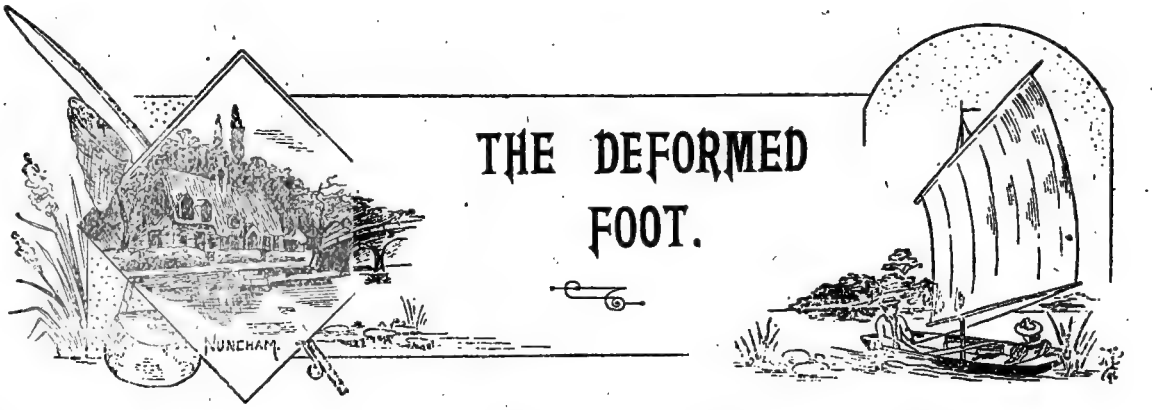

# THE DEFORMED FOOT.

The story I shall tell you was told me by an Italian lady. She had been showing me the work of her father, who must have been a sculptor of ability, her mother's head, which was lovely; her own, as a child; a Cupid, a Venus, and the sculptor's own bust.

"My father was murdered, you know," the lady said, when I asked her to tell me the history of that wonderful face. "He was a sculptor; his studio was a little building apart from the house, with a light properly arranged, and encircled by foliage. He often was quite alone there late at night. No one ever dreamed of danger.

*"My father lay on the floor, foully murdered."*

"One night he arose from his bed, told my mother he had dreamt of a face which he wished to reproduce, and went to his studio. My mother fell asleep. She woke in the grey dawn. My father was not yet in the house.

"Dressing herself, she ran to the lonely building among the trees. My father lay upon the floor, foully murdered. She did not survive the shock.

"The motive was evidently robbery. His watch and two diamond rings were gone.

"Italian girls marry early. Though my mother was but thirty, I was fifteen, and a woman at heart. I vowed to revenge my father. I, who was now rich, resolved to spend all my fortune, if necessary, in bringing to justice the murderer of both my parents. "'Vendetta,' I cried; 'afterwards grief, but first his punishment.' I had but one clue. Upon a piece of clay that had fallen to the ground remained the impress of a man's bare foot — a strangely deformed foot. All the toes between the great and the little ones were gone.

"The police knew no such foot among the criminal class: but I kept the mould and its cast carefully.

"Under a pretence of befriending the poor, I went into many a dwelling where I knew there was more sin than suffering, always with my old nurse, a venerable woman of great good sense.

"I practised my father's art, and also painted, that I might be able to beg suspicious-looking people to pose for my figures.

"My reputation for benevolence drew about me the riff-raff of Naples. I was known to be young, and was supposed to be foolishly generous. Still I found no one with such a deformed foot as the cast exhibited.

"My aunt lived in the house with me. She was a woman of middle-age, and a great matchmaker.

"One day she proposed an alliance to me. A nobleman from France had offered himself—a marquis, very, very rich. I declared I had no thought but for my lost parents; but she insisted that I should at least know the gentleman.

"At last I promised this.

"He came splendidly attired, courteous to the point of flattery. He spoke of great people he had known; of the Empress, then in her prime, who spoke to him as 'My dear Friend.' He showed us orders, tokens of esteem from people known all over the world, but I did not believe in him.

"He struck me as an imposter—a man who would not hesitate at crime; and as I noticed a curious awkwardness—not quite a lameness—in his gait, the one object of my life—my monomania, if you will choose to call it so—arose before me.

"'Pardon me,' he said as he trod on my aunt's train; 'I received a wound in battle which makes one of my feet trouble me somewhat sometimes. I nearly lost the favour of the Empress by the same accident. When I informed her of the cause of my awkwardness, she was gracious enough to reply: "One must pardon everything to a brave soldier."'

"'Bah!' I thought. 'You are telling falsehoods.' But my aunt loaded him with compliments until I was ashamed of her. She ended by asking him to sup with us I listened eagerly.

"'I hope you will come,' I added, with a smile. My aunt tapped me pleasantly on the shoulder with her fan.

"'It's not always that Irene seconds my invitation,' she said.

"'You are sensible, child,' she said, when he was gone.

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'The marquis is a great catch. Not very handsome, certainly, and has a little limp, but it is the defect of a hero—a soldier's wound. It is really quite a charm when one thinks of that.'

"I interrupted her by asking if we might have five o'clock tea before the supper.

"'I wish to fill this cup for the Marquis,' I said, 'It is such a pretty attention—one a lady may offer with grace.'

"'I never saw you so charming,' said my aunt. 'Tea, of course, if you like it.'

"After this I waited with impatience for the evening of the promised visit. If I were to tell you what thoughts filled my mind you would think me mad. I scarcely slept. I ate only enough to keep me alive. My aunt laughed at me and told me I was in love. Oh, little could she read my heart? I had never hated anything as I hated that man.

"At last the day came. Dressed in white, with roses in my belt and one great red one in my hair, I greeted the Marquis with a smile.

"My aunt was charming; he all adoration.

"Occasionally my old nurse appeared at the door. I made her a little sign, which she understood. 'Not yet,' it said to her. The tea was brought in. I filled the cups, and replenished the pot. The Marquis emptied his cup rapidly.

"'Tea becomes nectar, made by such hands,' he said.

"'Let me replenish your cup,' I cried.

"I lifted the boiling pot, crossed the room, smiled as he held up the cup, and then the pot slipped, and its contents were emptied over the foot of our guest.

*"'Arrest the murderer of my father!'"*

"He uttered a yell of pain. I flung the pot away. It was of fine porcelain, and shattered into fragments on the polished floor, beyond the Persian rug. I sank on my knees at his feet, ignoring the low oath he had uttered.

"'I have scalded the Marquis,' I cried. 'Let me do my best to repair the injury.'

"I pulled off the delicate evening shoe. He was weak with pain, but he resisted. I removed his stocking, while he panted:

"'I beg, signora, that you will not trouble yourself.'

"And I saw what I had expected. My nurse had rushed in. I made her a sign.

"'The time has come,' I said to her, in this mute fashion. Then the room was filled with police officers.

"'Arrest the murderer of my father!' I cried.

"My aunt shrieked, but these men care little for women's cries or men's imprecations. They led the Marquis away, well guarded.

"He proved to be a man who had escaped from one of the French prisons—a man of twenty murders. He had stolen his orders and his letters of introduction from a master he had also robbed of money and jewels.

"His maimed foot filled the mould in the clay exactly, and precisely resembled the cast. Moreover, my father's watch was found on his person. He was tried and found guilty. He made a full confession before his execution.

"'The big diamond on the gentleman's finger tempted me,' he said. 'I never could resist fine diamonds—never! Then he wrestled with me, and his death became necessary to insure my life.'

"It is years ago," said the Italian lady, "but I never shall forget my strange and terrible joy in my revenge.'

"The people cheered me in the streets. My story was told by the 'improvisatores,' and sung by the singers in the streets.

"It was a nine days' wonder. I wept, I laughed, I thanked Heaven.

"I was not seventeen but I had carried a vendetta to its bitter end.

"Since then," the signora said softly, "other things have come to me—love, a husband, children. I am more tender, perhaps not so determined, not so sure of my own instincts. Like all other people, I reason more, and have less faith in feeling. Still, I have never been sorry for what I did. I shall always feel that I was right in avenging my father's murder as though I had been a son."

MADGE MORRIS.

HAVE YOU HEARD

Sir Arthur Sullivan's "Willow Song" in the June Number of MELODY? or the late Charles Gounod's violin solo, "The Dove"? They are delightful, both of them.

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# CARELESS LOVE.

THAT Jack Morrow had the finest ranch in all Texas everybody in those parts, from Paint Rock to San Angelo, firmly believed. That Jack Morrow was a perfect "fury" when aroused, everybody also knew. He was tall, dark and twenty-eight, and he went to Austin and took to himself a wife. This was the cause of all his trouble, as it has been that of many other men.

Rose Shannon was as pretty as the flower she was named after, and had long been a belle of Austin. Why she had married the tall, dark English man, rich in horses and cattle, when he came courting, she could not tell; but marry him she did, and into the San Angelo country she went to keep his big house on the Couché River.

It was all novel for the city girl away up there in central Texas. The long rides across the flat prairie with the attentive but somewhat silent husband, the glories of the new big house, with its balconies and stately rooms; the grand piano in the parlour, the army of servants at beck and call; all these things were new to the young wife, and time passed pleasantly for a while. Then little by little the long flat prairie, gay with flowers, became more tiresome to her eyes; little by little the rides grew tiresome, too. She got angry with herself, the country, her husband, and everybody else.

But Jack Morrow hated the city, moreover it was a long distance from his home. He had the best in Texas and the prettiest wife. He frowned down all her petulant little hints for a visit back to Austin, and the little bride, who thought a while ago that she was happy, sulked and held a half wish in her heart for another fellow.

One day the other fellow came to San Rosa. He was third or fourth cousin to Jack's wife, and if she had chosen to write to him of late, it was all in the family, and Jack took no notice.

Dick Thorn was twenty-two; he was good looking, accomplished, and as thorough-paced a young scamp as ever played poker in Austin or took the place of better men in women's hearts in all Texas.

Under Dick's auspices life began anew at San Rosa ranch. He gathered the country side at balls at the big house, played sentimental songs on the guitar, and beat Jack Morrow himself at poker and at a horse race on the big track Jack had on the ranch.

Maybe Jack Morrow left them too much alone; maybe it was just the inward evil in a wife well loved and a friend too kindly treated.

Anyway, it started—just as many other things do that end seriously—in fun first, and then sped swiftly from jest to earnest.

Dick had been playing the courtly kinsman. It was "*Ma belle cousine*," and a stately kiss upon the finger-tips at first. Things do not generally stay where they are started. It was "dear coz" now, and the kiss had reached the lips. The serio-comic salute upon the hand had been given in Jack's presence. The present plan was, somehow, postponed until Jack was going out among his men and cattle. Not that there was any harm in it, oh, no!

About this time someone had written a song. It was a good song, too, and Dick sang it. Perhaps it was this song that was the cause of it all—who knows?

He was singing one moonlight night, seated at the piano, and the two were alone. Rose was standing beside him turning the music, not that it was necessary, however, because it wasn't the song Dick was singing, and, if it had been, Dick had a way of throwing in extemporaneous verses of his own that were neat in their way, but generally foreign to the text, and made the music turning rather unnecessary.

It was the new song Dick was singing, and singing as only he could sing. It was the wail of some lone maiden who had loved and lost, and Dick was throwing a tenderness into the strain hardly its own.

> Careless love, careless love,
> 'Tis careless love like thine,
> That has broken the heart of many a girl,
> And has broken this poor heart of mine.

The hand turning the music trembled. Dick looked up. There was no reason why Jack Morrow's wife should have tears in her eyes.

"Rose," he whispered, "do you mean it?"

"Oh, Dick, Dick, your love is careless love."

"Not for you, Rose. I loved you before this man you married—carried you away."

* * * * *

This was the beginning of days that better for all had they never been.

Dick seldom rode about with Jack from that day. The song of "Careless Love" he sang no more. And so the summer sped.

* * * * *

When Dick Thorn went back to Austin, Jack rode to San Angelo, the nearest station, with him, and bade him good-bye with a smile.

"Come again, old fellow," he said. "You don't know how gay you've made San Rosa. We'll miss you much, and the place will be dull without you."

This was a long speech for Jack, and Dick replied in kind, and muttered, "the fool," as he waved his hat to him farewell.

* * * * *

Austin is a long way from the San Angelo country, and the post comes but once a week to San Rosa ranch. Yet Dick Thorn wrote a letter every week, always to Mrs. Jack, who handed the letters to her husband. They were calm and cousinly letters, and Jack liked to read them.

There might have been two letters in each, and Jack saw but one that was intended for his eyes, or if this was not always so, it was once—but that comes later.

A man named Adams had a ranch up the Couché, near Big Springs. He had tried Texas and cattle raising, and he did not like it. He wrote to Jack, saying he would like to sell his cattle, and Jack thought it would be a good investment, so he decided to go to Big Springs and see Adams, a journey of two weeks.

It was about this time that Dick Thorn had assented to Jack's invitation in each letter that his wife wrote, to come again to San Rosa. "He'll stir things up, sweetheart," said Jack.

So Dick was coming, and Jack was afraid that if he went to Big Springs, Dick might come without his having the pleasure of meeting him himself at the

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station, and riding with him home. However, Dick's last letter said he would not come for three weeks, and Jack decided to go to Big Springs, and see Adams.

He was booted and spurred, waiting in the hall to kiss his wife good-bye before he set out, when he espied the end of a letter sticking out of a book on the hall table.

"It's Dick's letter," he thought. "I saw Rose reading it and put it in here when she saw me coming, and then she ran upstairs." And for something to do while waiting, he pulled it out to read it over again, especially that part that read about "that fine old fellow, Jack." However, this letter did not read that way:

DARLING ROSE,—You say "the fool" is going to Big Springs, Wednesday next. Well, I leave here for San Rosa, Friday, then, and we can have things all by ourselves until he gets back. It will be easy to explain to him why I came sooner than I said in that letter which I always inclose as a blind for "dear hubby." I'll have a surprise for you, a big one. Be sure to get him to go, so nothing will be awkward if he should be at the ranch when I turn up three weeks ahead of time. I miss you so much, but wait till we meet again and the happy days of last summer will be renewed. Your own true love, JACK.

If any man had struck Jack Morrow in the face, if any man had wantonly insulted him to the teeth with the foulest epithets that human tongue could form, such an expression of hate could never have come to Jack's face, as was brought there by these few marks of ink and paper.

He saw it all—many trifles that he had not noticed at the last visit of Dick Thorn came back with confirmation strong as proof of holy writ.

With a calmness that he wondered at himself, he smoothed the crumpled letter and placed it back in the book. Already the wild resolve to blot out with blood the stain upon his honour, flashed through his brain. He had been wronged most cruelly, his vengeance would be full and ample, and it lay in one word: "Death!" From that moment Jack Morrow was insane—insane, but with the madman's cunning that plans a purpose and carries it to the end.

He kissed his wife good-bye; he laughed as he did so, and he rode away, pale and haggard. Mrs. Jack noticed how aged and grim he looked, and even simpered at the thought that his long journey might be fatal to him, for did he not look ill? And if she was a widow, why Dick—but pshaw, there was no such good luck.

It was Dick, Dick all day. She even opened the piano that had been shut long. She thought of the night Dick had sat there while the glorious Texas moonlight streamed through the window.

Half unconscious of what she did, she played the song of that night:

Careless love, careless love,
'Tis a careless love like thine,
That has broken the heart of many a girl,
And has broken this poor heart of mine.

Why did she shiver? A false note, like the wail of a lost soul, shuddered through the room. It was dark there. She called loudly for a light, and when the old negro woman brought it, she laughed at herself and wondered why she had been afraid.

Sunday night at last; Dick was coming. Since Friday one of the negro boys had been at the station at San Angelo with saddle-horses.

There was to be a big frolic among the darkies at the quarters, half-way across the ranch, and all the house servants had been given permission to go. It was a little lonely she thought, with a grim little smile, of the husband far away on his weary ride to Adam's ranch.

At San Angelo Dick Thorn hurriedly gave directions for the sending of his traps on, when the afternoon train left him at the station.

On horseback then, and the swift ride to the ranch began. It would be after dark when the ranch would be reached. But there would be a moon, and Dick ran his hand over the guitar strapped to his saddle. This was the surprise he wrote to Rose about. He would send the boy away to the frolic—he knew all about it—and silently gliding up to the house, would serenade Rose like a troubadour of old, and, climbing up the balcony, claim his reward—a kiss. Rather a silly idea, but silly women like silly ways, and none knew this better than Dick Thorn.

At nine o'clock the moon hung like a burnished shield on the walls of heaven; its rays poured down in hazy lines as light clouds crossed its glory; and on and on Dick Thorn rode to San Rosa ranch while the same moon looked down on the just and unjust. Ten o'clock; San Rosa reached at last.

The boy turns the horses into the corral and scampers away across to the quarters, and Dick Thorn glides likes a shadow to the house; it is all dark. The moon, that throws its angles into black lines of shade, makes it seem a house of shadows, dark as death.

The guitar is unslung from the shoulder, the quick fingers touch the strings. Beneath her window the soft tinkle of its tuneful strains arises:

Far off, far off, the river creeps
The stars shine down above;
All nature still a silence keeps,
The night was made for love.

The soft breeze stirs the sleeping flowers,
That tremble with the dew;
They wake but in the sunny hours,
Love lives the whole night through.

The frost will chain the river's flow,
The flowers die at its breath;
Nor frost, nor snow stay love, I know,
For love lives on, past death.

Dick's voice broke with emotion at the last word, "death." But he laughed aloud as a rose fell from the balcony and struck his arm—a rose as white as snow! Dick picked it up and stuck it in his coat. One hand touched the balcony post, the other followed, and Dick climbed up to claim the kiss the rose invited.

He reached the top, and threw himself across the rail. His foot touched something soft; he looked down—it was a bunch of flowers in a dead woman's hand, and the dead woman was Rose Morrow.

Love was stronger than death, he had sung; his fear was stronger than his love. Yet despite this, and the loud beating of his heart, was the desire to fly with a cry from this thing of horror—a woman in white, cold and still, with that gash across the throat!

"Rose, Rose!" he cried. "Oh, God, who has done this thing?"

"I!" A dark form stood beside him. "You played well; your sentimental song was not inappropriate. But come, the lover with his lute seems frightened at the way his mistress greets him." Then in sudden fury: "I tell you she lay dead, even while your silly song floated up to where she and I, the false dead woman and the husband who killed her, awaited you. A rose fell from her hand as if she threw it and struck you as it fell. It makes a fair mark on your breast. Take that, you dog!" and Jack Morrow's knife clove the rose the dead had given and the false, frightened heart that beat beneath it.

T. S.

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## RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM COMPETITION.

Below are published the solutions to the problems set in The Brain Gymnasium in *Short Stories* dated May 16th. A large number of competitors succeeded in getting all but one or two correct, most of them stumbling over No. 14. The prizes have gone to Mr. George D. Taylor, 28, Ernest Street, Rhyl; and Mr. J. H Tripney, 50, Conigor Road, Fulham, S.W., Gold-plated pencil-cases have been sent as consolition prizes to the fifty competitors whose attempts the Editor considered sufficiently meritorious.

Key No. 11.

(a) D—rain.
(b) R—ice.
(c) S—light.
(d) B—lock.
(e) D—rabble.
(f) T—hump (or B—low).

Key No. 12.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **S** | **O** | N | G |
| J | **U** | G | S |
| M | O | **P** | E |
| W | A | S | **P** |
| S | A | **L** | E |
| M | **E** | N | D |
| T | A | U | L |
| P | **E** | U | D |
| S | A | **N** | E |
| G | U | S | **T** |
| S | **N** | **A** | T |
| P | **R** | A | Y |
| Y | O | K | E |

Key No. 13.

B in D
R oa R
A ri A
G li B

Key No. 14.

Assuming that the Editor works 24 hours a day for 365 days in the year, that he takes as long to carry the odd ten copies as a full quire, and that leap years are taken into consideration, the answer is 60 years, 31 weeks, 5 days, 13 hours, 46 minutes.

Key No. 15.

I deprecate and imprecate the folly
Of giving wedding presents all the while,
The plan has caused a settled melancholy
To brood where once there was a pleasing smile.

My friends, it seems, are always getting married,
Their weddings to my sovereigns few give wings.
My vacant purse too long the load has carried
Of buying for them pretty, useless things.

Key No. 16.

| | |
|---|---|
| M | annerin G |
| I | mped E |
| D | id O |
| D | isaste R |
| L | o G |
| E | ducat E |
| M | enageri E |
| A | dmira L |
| R | abb I |
| C | ame O |
| H | amle T |

Key No. 17.

The word of which the letters may be transposed the greatest number of times on pages 511 and 512, is Limes, on page 512, column 2, line 5.
Limes.—Smile, miles, slime, misle, Selim.
Among the most popular words sent in by competitors were:
Stop.—Tops, pots, post, spot.
Name.—Mean, mane, mena, Amen.
Reins.—Rinse, sirea, risen, resin.
Rates.—Aster, tares, tears, stare.

Key No. 18.

Pencil-makers.

Key No. 19.

The anagrams were not at all distinguished for their brilliancy. Among the best sent in were:

1. Grand! Do let men hear.
2. Rich Tom Holt eats fried lentils.
3. A two weeks' leave.
4. Serfs should hope.
5. Oh, vote for Hale.

Key No. 20.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | E | V | O | N | S | H | I | R | E. |

1. Done. 2. Shed. 3. Hire. 4. Shin. 5. Dove. 6. Shone. 7. Rode. 8. Render. 9. Hone. 10. Even.

# PICTURE ✣ PUZZLE ✣ PRIZE.

## No. 7.

## £10 TO BE GIVEN AWAY.

**On the opposite page is a puzzle picture composed of 88 squares. If these squares be rearranged in a certain order they will form a real picture.**

**We offer a prize of £10 for the correct solution. In order to give readers in all parts of the United Kingdom as equal a chance as possible, none of the solutions received will be opened until Thursday, June 4th, when all those received will be considered together. In the event of two or more correct solutions being included up to this time, the prize will either be given to the sender of the *neatest* one, or will be divided amongst the correct competitors at the discretion of the Editor. Consolation Prizes will also be awarded.**

**If no correct solution be received on or before Tuesday, June 9th, 1896, the Ten-Pound Prize will be given to the sender of the solution then to hand which is most nearly correct.**

**Pictures should be packed flat or folded, not rolled, and the outside wrapper must be marked "Puzzle Number 7."**

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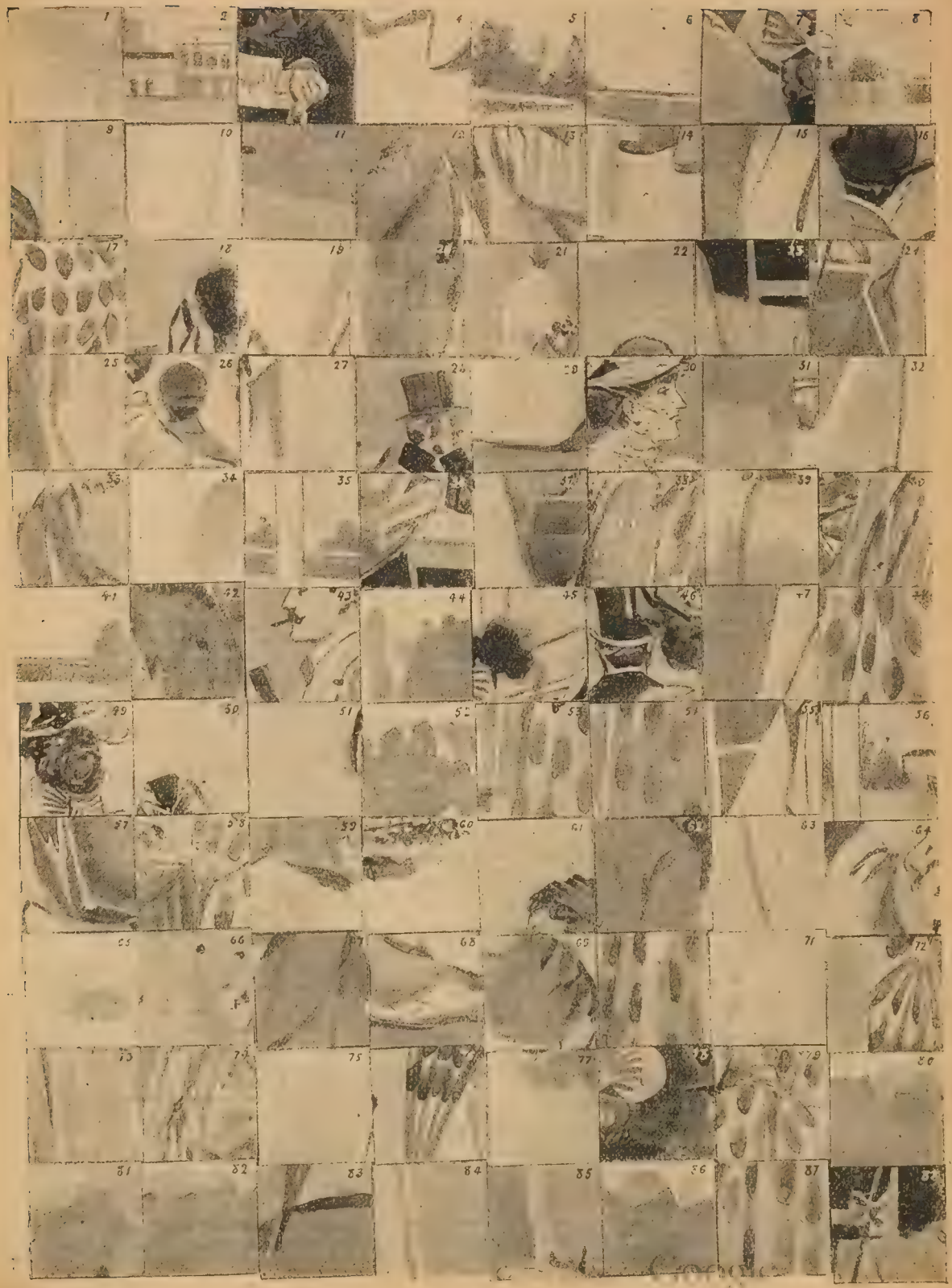

# AN INDIAN DRUG

BY HUAN MEE,

*Author of "The Czar's Diamond," "In Masquerade," "Alan Lindow's Wife," "Philip St. Voullé's Understudy," etc., etc.*

SUMMARY.

ESTLIN GODFRY brings from India three bottles of deadly poison, with which his friend, Walter Shenfield, a chemist, experiments on a rabbit. Estlin's uncle, Joseph Monro, is about to marry Ethel Sedwicke, and should he do so, Estlin will no longer come into the estate. On the wedding morning, Monro is found dead in his room. Estlin goes to London and consults an old friend, Sidney Larrance.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SUSPECTED.

SIDNEY LARRANCE puts himself to an enormous amount of trouble to secure a vacant carriage in the train, and then, locking the door with a railway key which he takes from his pocket, rolls himself up in his rug, and lighting a cigar, gazes reflectively out of the window, while Estlin Godfry waits with ill-concealed impatience for him to enlighten him as to his thoughts.

For ten minutes not a word is spoken, and then with a sigh Larrance turns towards his companion.

"It's no use," he says, "I must know more of the details. I cannot make head or tail of it; let us talk of something else."

To decide to talk of other things is simple, but to do so is impossible, and they drift back to the same channel again before they are aware of it.

At last Sidney Larrance leans forward, and placing his hand upon his companion's shoulder, gravely speaks.

"Estlin, I am about to say something to you which will be a greater blow than all that has gone before, bear it like a man and understand that whatever I do it is in your best interests, to prepare you for a blow which would come with devastating violence if you had no previous thought of it."

"Prepare me for a blow!" Estlin gasps; "something more terrible than what has occurred—I cannot understand you!"

"When a man dies suddenly, mysteriously, dies from poison, one has to consider why that poison was administered. Suicide, murder or misadventure."

"Yes—but——"

"Wait, look the matter fairly in the face with me. Suicide we may put out of the question. A man who has no insanity in his blood does not choose the morning of his wedding to commit self destruction, and even if he does he leaves some sign, perhaps a phial in which the poison has been, and, nine cases out of ten, some word to those he leaves behind."

"Well?" Estlin hoarsely ejaculates.

"We will not, then, consider suicide. Now murder, what of that? To explain a murder one must look to revenge or some other strong motive. Forgive the suggestion but perchance the lady who was to have married your uncle may be able to give a clue. Had she as far as you are aware any previous history, say an entanglement, which might indirectly have caused her to commit the deed, or influenced say a discarded lover to take so violent a step?"

"No, no, Larrance, you are no nearer the solution. They were devoted to each other. She has lived her whole life in this part of the country, and my uncle was the only man who had ever attracted her. I can swear to it on my life."

"Well, I accept the position. Dismiss her from the question. She has nothing to gain by your uncle's death and all to lose."

"She loses everything; his new will, of course, could not be signed until after the ceremony."

"Then the whole estate by the old will, which now holds good, will come to you?"

"It comes to me by law, but I know his wishes by the unsigned——"

"One moment. Now as far as you know, is there anyone who will benefit from the fact that this later will is so much waste paper?"

"Not a soul."

Sidney Larrance occupies a moment in lighting a fresh cigar, then suddenly, and speaking quickly, almost harshly, resumes the conversation.

"Think again, Estlin Godfry, think again. Look at the case not from the point of view of your own personality, look at it as an outsider will look at it who reads the evidence of to-morrow's inquest. Who is the gainer by your uncle's untimely death?"

For a moment Estlin Godfry returns the steady gaze of his friend with one of amazement, and then there spreads over his face a crimson flame, which, fading, leaves him haggard and deathly. He clutches the side of his seat and tries to rise, and the arm of his companion is around his shoulders, as with the other hand he forces the cup of a drinking flask between his teeth.

"Drink it, man, drink it; thank heaven *that* part of my duty is over."

"But you, Larrance, you, surely do not imagine——"

"Of course I do not, and that is what made it so difficult for me to force you to see it in the light that all the world will to-morrow."

Estlin Godfrey stares blankly out of the window in utter bewilderment, and Larrance continues deliberately to put the whole crushing truth before him. Better, he feels, to hammer everything well home now, than to let him torture himself to madness as his own mind suggests the damning facts heaped up against him.

"By your uncle's first and now legal will you are his heir

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at law," he continues. "Had he married, and then died, the old will would have become void by the English law, and his wife would have taken her proportion of the estate. Had he married, signed the new will and then died, the old will would of course, have become void, and——"

"I know, I know."

"Therefore you, Estlin Godfry, are his legal heir."

"Go on, go on; torture me to madness."

Sidney Larrance hesitates for a moment, bites his lip, and then gives the screw its final turn, "and you, Estlin Godfry, are therefore the only man who gains a single atom from his death."

"Then you assume that I murdered him," Godfry yells. "I did well to consult you. Curse you with your deliberate piling up of hypotheses, I would not trust a cur to your mercy," he breaks off with a hysterical laugh and then continues: "You have tried me in your egotistical judgment, Sidney Larrance, it only remains for you to don the black cap and sentence the unhappy prisoner to be hanged."

"It only remains for you to leave off being a fool, and listen to common sense," Larrance soothingly replies. "In discussing the second theory I have simply put before you the true position which you will occupy in the minds of the public to-morrow. If this blow had come in the open court, would it not have been a thousand times worse than from the lips of a man, a friend, who will not even break the thread of his learned discourse to trouble to tell you, what you know so well yourself, that you had nothing on earth to do with your uncle's death?"

*"Therefore you, Estlin Godfry, are his legal heir."*

Mr. Sidney Larrance's discourse does not however proceed smoothly, for, for a moment or two, there are earnest handshakes and profusions of apologies from his companion before he can recommence.

"To resume," he says at last, "we must look for the motive. We are satisfied that he did not commit suicide, we feel equally satisfied that he was not murdered—and yet perchance he had an enemy of whom you knew nothing, who chose the ripest moment for the deed. I must see everyone who can give me the least information. My intuition is at fault, let me endeavour to use the brains a prodigal Providence has bestowed upon me. I must see the lady who was to have been your uncle's wife."

"You cannot suspect——"

"Suspect no, but I certainly have an idea——"

What Sidney Larrance's idea was Estlin never knew; the train drew up with a jerk, the current of his thoughts was disturbed and together they alighted and walked along the deserted road into the town.

Estlin Godfry leaves Larrance that night deeply impressed by the seriousness of the position in which he is placed, but comforted by the thought that he has at least one man upon his side who will move heaven and earth to clear away the gloom that enshrouds him.

Suddenly there dawns upon him the remembrance of his actions on the very day before his uncle met his death. That Indian poison! Could it be possible in any way that his uncle had tasted the deadly drug from those curiously ornamented bottles—but no, it was absurd. Shenfield had them. He had two bottles, and the contents of the other one had been spilt. No, it was impossible that anyone could have touched it. Yet his uncle had died so suddenly, had been poisoned, and he, it would be known to-morrow, he had brought poison home with him from India. A fatal drug, instantaneous in its effects.

A cold sweat breaks out upon his brow as he realises that deadly circumstantial evidence is piling up against him, sufficient to brand him the blackest scoundrel, the most ungrateful villain that had ever trod the earth. So he passes the night, walking again and again the floor of his room, and ever searching for the key to the impenetrable mystery.

Sidney Larrance utilises the early morning of the day of the inquest in taking the first steps towards his inquiry. A glance at the windows of the study of the deceased man is sufficient to prove that access from without is impossible; a few words with one of the townsmen, staring open-mouthed at the house, places beyond all doubt the fact that the servants themselves are absolutely beyond suspicion. All natives of the town, they were too well satisfied with their easy position in a bachelor's household to wish for any change; and then he strolls through the town towards the house of the lady who was to have been the bride of him who is dead. He cannot settle for himself whether he ought not to risk everything and make an effort to see her and discover what light she can throw upon the mystery. He halts beside the house. Early though it is, a doctor's carriage is before the door, and a servant is standing by the gate.

"She hasn't been conscious for an hour together since that day," he hears the girl say. "Oh, what a horrible fate!"

What need to follow up such a clue. He turns reflectively

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"She hasn't been conscious for an hour together."

away; his intuition is blind to lead him towards a key to the mystery, but not so dead as not to assure him that nothing in the shape of light can be thrown upon the subject by the woman, who has lost all by the crime, and now lingers between life and death. He walks towards the Court where the inquiry is to be held and joins the crowd already assembled and discussing with extreme excitement and appreciation the latest horror. It is as he, admirable student of human nature, had imagined. Estlin Godfry is already tried, sentenced, and condemned in the impartial court of public opinion.

Of course he did it. It was obvious. If his uncle had married he would have lost all. He was a scoundrel with a fair face and dandified air, but a scoundrel all the same. But of course *they* all knew about it. One law for the rich and another for the poor. He'd get off right enough. What was that story a year or two ago, when Estlin Godfry was sent to India? Ah, that was a strange affair. Some theatrical girl. Oh! it was a bad business.

And so they gossip and gloat over the coming feast till the doors are thrown open, and they madly rush and fight for a seat to get a fair view of this latest free show in Maythorn.

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## CHAPTER V.

### The Inquest.

At ten a.m. Mr. Coroner Rogers opened the inquest upon the body of Joseph Monro of Merton House, Maythorn. In addressing the jury he said:

"Gentlemen, you are already aware of the sad circumstance which has necessitated summoning you together today to inquire into the cause of the death of our well-known and respected townsman, Mr. Joseph Monro, of Merton House.

"The unfortunate event occurred under the most distressing circumstances, which were rendered all the more painful from the day being the occasion fixed for the wedding of Mr. Monro with Miss Ethel Sedwicke, to whom, I am sure, the jury will join with me in respectfully conveying our sincere and heartfelt sympathy in her bereavement. The circumstances of the death of Mr. Monro appear to be shrouded in dense mystery, and it will be your duty, gentlemen, by an impartial review of the evidence to be laid before you to decide whether the sad event is to be attributed to the hand of the deceased himself, or whether there is anyone who could from revenge or other motive have had any design upon his life.

"It seems beyond reason to suppose that Mr. Monro could have had any cause to take his own life. He was in a position that gave him no financial anxiety, his health was excellent, and he was not known to have a single enemy. Less than an hour after the time of the sad occurrence he was to have been married, amid the congratulations of his friends, to an amiable and accomplished lady. Gentlemen, with almost the sound of the joy bells ringing in his ears, with the acclamations of his friends showering upon him, the hand of death closed down, and those who were bidden guests to a festival came only to a house of mourning and of grief.

"It will be your duty to sift every possible atom of evidence to the bottom, and not to overlook any shred that may tend to throw light upon this terrible mystery. Whatever conclusion, gentlemen, a calm and careful revision of the whole of the evidence laid before you may result in, it will be for you to declare your verdict accordingly, whether it be one of suicide, or death by misadventure, or whether it be one of wilful murder."

The address of the Coroner was listened to in breathless and sympathetic silence by the crowded court, and then the first witness, Dr. Hill, was called.

The Coroner: "Will you tell the jury, Doctor Hill, the condition in which you found the deceased?"

Dr. Hill: "As an old friend of Mr. Monro's I was invited to be best man at his wedding, and on arriving at the house an hour before the time fixed for the ceremony, was asked by Mr. Monro if I would, later in the day, together with Mr. Grindley, witness the will that he had drawn up for his signature. I consented. While we were awaiting the carriages Mr. Monro retired to his study, having requested his nephew, Mr. Estlin Godfry, to follow him. In a short time Mr. Godfry returned to us, stating that Mr. Monro was busy writing a couple of letters that he had forgotten, and that if we would go to his room in five minutes he would like to take a glass of wine with us before starting. Mr. Grindley and I proceeded to the study a few minutes after, and found Mr. Monro sitting at his writing-table with his head resting upon his hand. I thought at first that he had fallen asleep or had fainted. I tried his pulse, but it showed no sign of life, and upon raising him, he fell back inert. I loosened his collar and tie, and applied my stethoscope to his heart, but there was no pulsation. He was stone dead."

The Coroner: "Did you apply restoratives?"

Dr. Hill: "Yes, I used every endeavour to restore animation although from the first I perceived it was useless."

The Coroner: "You have held a post-mortem examination?"

Dr. Hill: "Yes, I discovered that the death was due to poison, the whole of the organs of the body were in a normal state, and the heart and lungs were perfectly healthy."

The Coroner: "Were you able to discover the poison that had been used?"

Dr. Hill: "No, sir; it must have been a very powerful poison, but I cannot tell what. I should say that death had been instantaneous and painless."

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A Juryman: "Did you notice any glass or bottle which could have contained the poison?"

Dr. Hill: "No, there was nothing upon the study table beyond a decanter of sherry—which I have analysed and found perfectly free from any poison—several empty wine glasses, and the two letters written and ready for the post, which he had intimated to Mr. Godfry he intended writing. The open will awaiting signature was also there."

The Coroner: "Could the poison have been taken in the form of a capsule?"

Dr. Hill: "I should think not, as there was nothing poisonous found in the stomach; it appeared to have been a poison that paralysed the whole system the instant it touched the tongue."

The Coroner: "You have never known a similar case in your experience?"

Dr. Hill: "No, sir."

The Coroner: "Or read of any such?"

Dr. Hill: "Not in England."

The Coroner: "Elsewhere?"

Dr. Hill: "I have read stories of Eastern poisons having these deadly effects, but they are unknown to us."

A Juryman: "You are quite certain that the condition of things you discovered could only have been brought about by some such poison?"

Dr. Hill: "Quite."

The Coroner: "There were no indications of heart disease or paralysis, nothing to cause death except the drug?"

Dr. Hill: "Nothing."

Mr. Grindley corroborated the evidence of Dr. Hill as to the condition in which Mr. Monro was found. There was no reason for Mr. Monro to take his own life that he was aware of. He had enjoyed the confidence of Mr. Monro and his personal friendship. He had acted as solicitor for him for twenty years. There were no financial embarrassments whatever in the deceased gentleman's affairs. He drew up the will that was lying upon the table in the study. That will left an annuity of £1,000 a year to Mr. Estlin Godfry, and the remainder of the property was exclusively and without restriction left to Mrs. Monro.

The letters found upon the table were then opened by the Coroner and read, but threw no further light upon the case, the one having relation only to some jewellery he wished forwarded to Windermere, where the honeymoon was to be spent, to arrive on the 30th August, Mrs. Monro's birthday, and the other to a personal friend absent in Scotland, thanking him for a congratulatory letter received that morning.

Estlin Godfry was then called and examined.

The Coroner: "You were the last person to see your uncle alive?"

Estlin: "Yes, I saw him not more than five minutes before he was found dead, when I went to his study at his own request."

The Coroner: "For what object?"

Estlin: "He desired to discuss some private financial matters with me."

The Coroner: "In regard to what?"

Estlin: "Chiefly in regard to his will. He told me that by the will, a copy of which was lying upon the table, he had left me the sum of £1,000 a year and that the rest of his property went absolutely to his wife."

The Coroner: "He didn't seem to you to be unwell, or suffering from any depression of spirits?"

Estlin: "No, never seemed better in his life."

The Coroner: "He didn't give you the impression of a man likely to take his own life?"

Estlin: "Certainly not."

The Coroner: "You were, I believe, on the best of terms with your uncle; your relations were cordial and friendly?"

Estlin: "Yes, sir."

The Coroner: "This proposed wedding had not proved a cause of estrangement?"

Estlin: "No, sir, my uncle had informed me that it would make no difference in the household and that I should be regarded as I had always been—his adopted son."

The Coroner: "Are you aware whether your uncle had any poison in his possession?"

Estlin: "I don't know."

The Coroner: "Was he a good sleeper?"

Estlin: "Fairly."

The Coroner: "Was he troubled with insomnia?"

Estlin: "Very occasionally, once or twice lately, he had not slept as well as usual, and in the course of conversation asked me if I knew of any harmless drug that would induce sleep."

The Coroner: "Did you recommend him anything?"

Estlin: "No, sir."

A Juryman: "Why should he ask you instead of his medical attendant?"

Estlin: "Perhaps because he thought I might have heard of something in my travels."

The Coroner: "You have travelled a great deal?"

Estlin: "I have been in India nearly two years."

The Coroner: "Have you any acquaintance with Indian drugs?"

Estlin: "Very little; I believe they have curious properties, but I have never tried them."

The Coroner: "Did you bring any specimens to England that your uncle by chance might have got possession of, and taken either accidentally or with intent?"

Estlin: "I did bring home some drugs, but my uncle could not have got possession of them."

The Coroner: "Why?"

Estlin: "Because the night before I took them away from the house."

The Coroner: "Why?"

Estlin: "To show to a friend."

The Coroner: "A scientific friend?"

Estlin: "Yes."

The Coroner: "Will you be good enough to tell the jury his name?"

Estlin: "It was Walter Shenfield."

The Coroner: "Thank you, that will do. Call Walter Shenfield."

The Coroner: "Well, Mr. Shenfield, you have generally supplied the late Mr. Monro with whatever drugs or toilet requisites he has used?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir."

The Coroner: "Have you sold him any poisons?"

Walter Shenfield: "Never to my recollection."

The Coroner: "If you had done so, you would have entered the record of the sale in your 'poisons book'?"

Walter Shenfield: "Undoubtedly, sir."

The Coroner: "You have that book here?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir."

The Coroner: "Is there any entry of ever having supplied Mr. Monro with poisons?"

The witness turned over the few written pages of the book—there were not many entries—and then replied in the negative.

The Coroner: "You know something of poisons and their action, of course?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir, I have made a special study of the matter."

The Coroner: "Why?"

Walter Shenfield: "Merely a hobby. It interests me."

The Coroner: "Indeed. You have heard no doubt the manner in which the deceased gentlemen was found. Have you ever had any experience of a similar case?"

Walter Shenfield: "No, sir."

The Coroner: "Estlin Godfry told us in his evidence just now, that the evening before the day fixed for the wedding of the deceased, he brought down to you several bottles of drugs."

Walter Shenfield: "Yes."

The Coroner: "Why did he do so?"

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Walter Shenfield: "I do not know."

The Coroner: "Did he mention the nature and property of the drugs?"

Walter Shenfield: "He said he had been told they were deadly."

The Coroner: "How many bottles did he bring?"

Walter Shenfield: "Three."

The Coroner: "You have them still?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes—that is, two of them."

The Coroner: "Two, what became of the third?"

Walter Shenfield: "It was opened by myself, and the contents accidentally spilled."

The Coroner: "Why did you open it?"

Walter Shenfield: "To test it."

The Coroner: "How?"

Walter Shenfield: "By giving an infinitesimal dose to a rabbit."

The Coroner: "Who suggested this?"

Walter Shenfield: "Mr. Godfry."

The Coroner: "What was the result?"

Walter Shenfield: "The animal died instantly." (Sensation in Court.)

The Coroner: "How was the poison spilled?"

Walter Shenfield: "In its dying convulsion the animal knocked the bottle over."

The Coroner: "Where was this?"

Walter Shenfield: "In my shop, on the counter."

The Coroner: "When?"

Walter Shenfield: "Tuesday night last."

The Coroner: "What was the time?"

Walter Shenfield: "Ten minutes to ten."

*"The animal died instantly."*

The Coroner: "Had you closed your shop?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes."

The Coroner: "Your usual closing time is ten, is it not?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes."

The Coroner: "You closed earlier than usual that night?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, ten minutes."

The Coroner: "Why?"

Walter Shenfield: "Because business was quiet, and I wanted a chat with Mr. Godfry, who suggested I might as well shut the shop."

The Coroner: "You have known Mr. Godfry a long time?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, many years."

The Coroner: "What became of the bottle that was upset?"

Walter Shenfield: "I destroyed it together with the paper with which I soaked up the spilt fluid."

The Coroner: "Had the bottle been opened before?"

Walter Shenfield: "No, sir."

The Coroner: "You are sure of that?"

Walter Shenfield: "Absolutely."

A Juryman: "How do you know?"

Walter Shenfield: "Because the skin covering the cork was intact, and the bottle was full."

The Coroner: "You have the other two bottles?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, safe under lock and key."

The Coroner: "Can you swear that Mr. Godfry only brought those three bottles home from India?"

Walter Shenfield: "No."

The Coroner: "Can you prove that he had no more?"

Walter Shenfield: "No, sir."

The Coroner: "You cannot give any reason why Mr. Godfry should bring these three bottles to you?"

Walter Shenfield: "None, unless it was that as a chemist I should naturally be interested."

The Coroner: "Have you sold any drugs or articles to the late Mr. Monro recently."

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, on Wednesday morning I sold him a bottle of Eau de Cologne."

The Coroner: "On Wednesday morning last?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir."

The Coroner: "That was on the day of the wedding."

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir."

The Coroner: "What time was that?"

Walter Shenfield: "Nine in the morning."

The Coroner: "Did you sell him nothing else?"

Walter Shenfield: "No, sir, nothing. I let him have half-a-dozen stamps, as he had not time to go down to the post-office—nothing more."

The Coroner: "He seemed in good health and spirits?"

Walter Shenfield: "Never better."

The Coroner: "Was he excited at all?"

Walter Shenfield: "A little, but not more than was to be expected under the circumstances."

The Coroner: "What circumstances?"

Walter Shenfield: "His wedding."

The Coroner: "Oh, of course."

A Juryman: "I suppose no mention was made by you of the visit over night of Mr. Godfry?"

Walter Shenfield: "No, there was no necessity."

The Coroner: "Did Mr. Monro enter into conversation with you that morning?"

Walter Shenfield: "Only a word or two in response to my congratulations."

The Coroner: "Did he mention his nephew?"

Walter Shenfield: "No, sir."

The Coroner: "Has Mr. Godfry ever discussed the question of poisons with you before?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir." (Sensation.)

The Coroner: "In what way?"

Walter Shenfield: "He has expressed wonder at my researches and experiments."

The Coroner: "In regard to poisons?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir."

The Coroner: "In what particular directions have your studies been?"

Walter Shenfield: "In the discovery of antidotes."

The Coroner: "Did Mr. Godfry know this?"

Walter Shenfield: "Yes."

The Coroner: "Was he interested in the study?"

Walter Shenfield: "Not very much; he did not seem to appreciate the utility of such discoveries."

The Coroner: "Why?"

Walter Shenfield: "I do not know."

The Coroner: "But you just said that he had discussed the matter with you."

Walter Shenfield: "Oh, only very slightly—nothing beyond saying that if a man wanted to commit suicide one might as well let him do so, and not bother about antidotes."

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The Coroner: "He said *suicide*?"
Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir."
Mr. Shenfield begins to look decidedly bewildered at the series of questions pointing directly to some connection between Mr. Godfry and the death of his uncle, and casts a furtive glance round the Court.
The Coroner: "Did you see Mr. Godfry on the day of the wedding?"
Walter Shenfield: "No, sir."
The Coroner: "Are you perfectly sure of that?"
Walter Shenfield: "Yes, sir."

*"It looked black for Estlin Godfry."*

The Corozer: "You have had no communication with him in regard to the bottles of poison you hold, since the sad occurrence?"
Walter Shenfield: "No, sir."
The Coroner: "That will do."
This concluded the evidence for the first day, and the Court was adjourned for a week.
There were not wanting wiseacres who sagely shook their heads as they discussed the evidence that night, and more than one sapient judge remarked that "It looked black for Estlin Godfry."

*(To be continued.)*


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I am exceedingly obliged to you for the very handsome enlargement of the portrait of my deceased brother, which I received this morning. It is, in fact, more lifelike than the original, and the most satisfactory work of the kind that I have ever met with.

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I acknowledge with very much pleasure and an abundance of thanks, the magnificent pictures of my late father and mother, which came to hand safely on Friday last. They are "streets" beyond what I expected, being in every respect speaking likenesses. I have shown them to a number of friends who are unanimous in their praise.


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# The Brain Gymnasium

## No. 5.—NEW SERIES.

# TWO PRIZES OF A GUINEA EACH.

BELOW will be found the fifth batch of ten problems in the new series of The Brain Gymnasium. Two prizes of a Guinea each are offered weekly to those competitors who answer correctly the greatest number of these problems.

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2. Do not write the questions; simply put the numbers and the answer against each.
3. Each set to contain the £100 coupon (found on second page of cover) for the current week.
4. All attempts to be in by Monday, June 8th.
5. Mark your envelope "Gymnasium, Number 5."

(41.) The word forming the solution to this problem signifies "Examination." The figures indicate the relative positions of the letters contained in the word.

Example: CONSUME. 1, 2, 6, 7, spell "to arrive."

Problem:

1. 3, 5, 6, 7, spell "a party."
2. 10, 9, 7, spell "a negative."
3. 10, 5, 3, 7, spell "an abode."
4. 3, 5, 10, 7, spell "did send."
5. 10, 9, 7, 5, spell "a short letter."
6. 4, 5, 3, 7, spell "to plague."
7. 7, 1, 2, spell "a metal."
8. 3, 7, 9, 9, 4, spell "to bend down."
9. 4, 5, 10, 3, spell "writing implements."
10. 3, 9, 4, spell "to dip in liquor."

(42.) Charade.

My first is to exceed.
My second is granted.
My whole is remarkable for good properties.

(43.) If K=51½, L=½, M=2, P=37½, and Y=18½, what word on this page has the greatest numerical value?

Example: LAMPREY.

L = ½
M = 2
P = 37½
Y = 18½
58½

(44.) If a lady start on a tricycle from a given point and ride at the rate of eight miles an hour, how far will she have gone before she is caught up by a man riding a safety at an average speed of thirteen miles an hour, who starts thirty-three minutes after, and alights four times for refreshments, making an average stay of four minutes at each place?

(45). Word Square.

The words defined below, when placed one over the other, will read across and downwards alike:

1. To gather.
2. Otherwise.
3. Serpents of a poisonous kind.
4. A plague.

(46.) Acrostics.

The initials and finals read downwards and upwards spell "a subordinate."

1. To wallow.
2. Out of date.
3. A mediæval weapon.
4. The words of an opera.

The initials and finals spell "a government official."

1. A pirate.
2. A plant.
3. A form of competition.
4. Inhabitants of an island in the Indian Ocean.

(47.) The letters constituting the words which form the key to this problem are mixed up in even pairs of words commencing from the first.

Example: Tu abt ort pehapahc=But at the approach.

Problem:

Nhac denes wet lahy, esa h tootd seher, sin had den kane derti yesapec nik oto fan dully preach teadpeti fob tueay she liren.

(48.) Make an anagram out of the following sentence:
Grasped by Death.

(49.) The following paragraph appears in this number of *Short Stories*. What is it?

"Ax txe cxxxxxxxxxt x pxxxxxl ixxxxxxxn wxs sxxxxxxxxt tx dxxxxxxxe txxs hxxxxxxxxxxn. Wxxxxxt axxxxxxxg axxxxxxxn x axxxe axd wxxt tx mx cxxxxr. A dxxh ox cxxd wxxxr ox txe fxxxxxxd rxxxxxxd cxxm. Txe sxxxxxe dxxxxxxxxd axd x rxxxxxxd sxxxxxg.

(50.) What word on this page contains the greatest number of vowels?

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# CLEAN OUT THAT SPRING.

"Tom," said my wife to me one morning at breakfast, "if you have time to-day I wish you would clean out the spring. The water doesn't taste just right, and there may be things in it that will make us ill. It's been running roily quite often lately, too."

Now that spring was about a quarter of a mile from the house, and the water came down through a pipe. We used it for everything—washing, cooking, and drinking. It was very soft and sweet, and practically the same temperature all the year round. But things would get into it, and so it was my job to give it an annual cleansing and scouring. Rather a wet and disagreeable task, but worth while; for after its purgation the spring sent out water clear as a diamond, and pure as Nature could brew it.

What flowing water is to the earth the blood is to the human body. Unless the blood is free from impurities you cannot be healthy. For that reason few persons are really in perfect condition, perhaps nobody. There is no such thing as curing any disease unless we can drive the germs or poisons which cause it out of the blood.

But how do impurities get into the blood? Through and from the stomach, for the blood is manufactured from the food in the stomach. When the digestion is perfect, or nearly so, the blood is virtually pure. It builds up the body, and gives elasticity, strength, and good spirits. When the digestion is bad the food ferments in the stomach and loads the blood with impurities, exactly as a foul spring or well sends out contaminated water. Take an example:

"In March, 1885," says Mrs. Ann Willis, of 51, Rigg Street, Crewe, "I found myself in a low, weak state of health. I ached all over, and was as weary and tired as though I had been working beyond my strength; yet that was not the cause. My appetite was poor, and after eating I was puffed and swollen at my chest and had a deal of pain. I was much troubled with maziness, and when out walking I feared I should fall down. My sleep was broken up and I felt as tired in the morning as when I went to bed. Then I got low and nervous. I couldn't bear company, and took no interest in anything. For nearly two years I was confined to my bed, under a doctor's care. It was in February, 1887, that a friend urged me to try Mother Seigel's Syrup. I got a bottle from the Co-operative Stores in West Street, and in a week I was greatly improved. I could eat better, and the food agreed with me. I was also brighter and in better spirits. I continued with the Syrup, and grew stronger and stronger, and able once more to do my work and enjoy my life. That is now eight years ago, and at this date, March 6th, 1895, I have had no return of the complaint."

"In the spring of 1889," says Mrs. Thomas Ward, newsagent, 276, Bridgeman Street, Bolton, "I felt strangely weak and ailing. At first I had a bad taste in the mouth, no appetite, and after eating I had weight and pain at the chest, and tightness around the waist. I had an awful pain at the pit of the stomach that never let up night or day, and made me irritable and wretched. After a time I got so bad I was afraid to eat—the food hurt me so. I became so weak that I almost fainted as I walked along the street. No medicine gave me relief. In March, 1890, after twelve months' suffering, my brother recommended me to use Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. He said he knew its virtues from a happy experience. I got a bottle from Mr. H. B. Pare, the chemist, in Lever Street, and it soon made me feel better, and in a few weeks it cured me completely. From that day to this (February 19th, 1895) I have been strong and well."

Thus we see it is as I said: to purify the blood we must do away with the indigestion, the dyspepsia; we must cleanse and tone the stomach, which (when diseased) is the foundation of all the mischief. This necessary task is done by Mother Seigel's Syrup, with a thoroughness that ensures a lasting and real cure. The whole body shares in the restoration, and so does the mind, whose powers rise and fall with the condition of the body. Now, as for the *stomach-spring*, don't wait for any set time to clean it out. Attend to it on the very day you perceive that it needs attention.

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